The History of Scouting in Wales

Introduction

Wales is a small corner of the Scouting world. As we complete the centenary of the movement there are Scout Associations in 216 of the world’s 222 recognised countries. Some of these are very small, numbering only a few hundred members – and the vast exception, of course, is China. Nevertheless there are more than 28 million Scouts world wide, of whom about 18 million are in the Asia/Pacific region, and over 600,000 in Africa. The United Kingdom has presently some 450,000 Scouts and Leaders, and Wales about 14,000. Scouting is comfortable with all the world’s major religions – and most of its minor ones – and is practised in dozens of different languages. The first Scout Law, drawn up in 1908, made it clear that the movement was for all races and faiths, a principal to which it has remained true. Sgowtiad Cymru has a fully bilingual policy, and has had from the beginning, although it was 1932 before Scouting for Boys appeared in Welsh, and the number of troops making full use of the language is small.

There have been numerous landmarks along the way. Robert Baden Powell came to Swansea in the same year as the Brownsea Island camp, 1907, and there were Scouts in both Swansea and Carmarthen before the end of 1908. In fact Scouting took off like a rocket. By 1910 there were over 108,000 Scouts and Leaders in Great Britain. In 1911 the Boy Scouts (as they were then called) were given a royal charter, and in 1912 the then Prince of Wales became the Principality’s first (and only) Chief Scout. At the same time Lord Glanusk became the first Chief Commissioner. In spite of having its own Chief Scout, Wales was fully administered by Imperial Headquarters in London, and Wolf Cubs and Rovers were introduced at the same time as in England. The same is true of the Girl Guides – but that is a separate story.

Wales sent a contingent to the first World Jamboree at Olympia in 1920, and has continued to do so at every Jamboree since. In 1925 the Welsh Scout Council was formed and an office was established in Llandrindod Wells. This did not mean that Scouting in Wales was devolved in the same way as in Scotland and Northern Ireland, but it did give Welsh Scouting a body capable of owning property, fund raising, and conducting such business as the translation of training material into Welsh. In short, it gave it an identity. The first Jamboree Cymru was held at Abergele in 1948, although there had been ‘all Wales Camps’ before that. The point about the Jamboree of course was that it was an international camp, whereas before that the only ‘foreigners’ had been the English and Scots. The next major ‘shake up’ had nothing particularly to do with Wales, but as a result of the Advance Party report in 1967 the big hats and the shorts which had been the trade marks of the movement since its inception, were consigned to history – a fact which (amazingly) still seems not to have impinged on the popular consciousness! More importantly, an awareness was growing that eleven year old boys are very different creatures from seventeen year olds. Senior Scouting (for the 15+ age group) had been introduced in 1949, and now the Advance Party brought an end to Rovering (which had never really recovered
from the second World War), replacing both with Venture Scouts whose ages were designed to run from 16 to 20.

In 1976 the ancient and thorny question of girls in scouting was approached afresh. Since the formation of the Girl Guides, the main role for women in Scouting had been as Leaders in the Cub section. Occasionally during both World Wars wives had taken over the responsibilities of absent husbands, but that was tolerated rather than encouraged by Headquarters. For girls under 18, there was no place. However, with the advance of co-educational secondary education that was seen as increasingly anachronistic, and nine years after it had been founded, the Venture Scout section was opened to girls. In spite of indignation at Guide Headquarters, it soon became apparent that there were ‘girls girls’ and ‘boys girls’, and the latter who joined the Venture Scouts were not mostly recruited from the Guides. All the training sections were opened to girls in 1991. Although the impact of this has been considerable (and would certainly have alarmed Baden Powell), the Scout Association, as it is now called, has not altered either its ethos or its training methods. The most noticeable consequence has been among the leaders, where, in addition to the ‘Lady Cubmasters’ of an earlier generation, and the occasional AVSL after 1976, women now feature prominently at all levels. The present Chief Commissioner and a number of Area Commissioners in Wales emphasise the point.

The Scout Movement continues to evolve, which is one reason why it is so necessary to maintain a sense of where we have come from. Its spiritual emphasis and socialising purpose have not changed, but the training programme, and the ways in which it is applied, have continually moved on. Scouts no longer signal with flags, or use the Morse code, and their websites are up there with the best. But a game of football is still a game of football, and the fascination of lighting open fires has not entirely succumbed to the delights of butane gas. In the 1980s the age range was extended by the creation of Beaver Scouts (an experiment pioneered in Canada, hence the name) for the 5 – 7 year olds, and just recently Venture Scouts have given way to Explorer Scouts, and the Scout Network has revived something of the best of the old Rover Crews. At the same time, Welsh Scouting, like the government of Wales, has become increasingly devolved. In 1992 the Council leased office premises in Llantwit Major, and miniature headquarters was established, and in 1996, having come to a financial understanding with Headquarters in London, Wales was able to keep its Field Commissioner Service, at a time when it was being discontinued in England. Since then the whole consultative and administrative structure of the movement in the United Kingdom has been overhauled, a process which it is unnecessary to relate here.

In 2000 the Welsh Scout Council published a brief outline history of its own functions and evolution, at which time it was observed that most of the history of Scouting in Wales consisted of anecdotes, of memories of outstanding leaders and of heroic efforts to rescue washed out camps. In other words, it was local history – sometimes very local – and it is upon that material that this present history is based. In 2000 we published in print, but this will appear on the WSC website. Not only is this a sign of changing times, it is also a deliberate attempt to make it interactive. Such material as has been assembled (and I am
immensely grateful to all contributors) is roughly divided by Area. In some cases complete pieces have been written in the Areas concerned, in others notes and other material has been provided, which I have used as I thought it fit. In no case should anything be regarded as ‘finished’ in the same sense as it would be between hard covers. Readers will send in corrections and improvements, and these will be incorporated as they are received – that is the great advantage of on-line publication. I am also well aware that many Areas, quite a few Districts and even some Groups, are proposing to write (or have already written) their own Centenary Histories. This is not intended to conflict with such efforts, but will rather supplement them, and add perhaps a wider dimension for such matters as jamborees and All-Wales events. It is, in a sense, a follow up to the ‘Archives Project’, which has been running for a number of years, and has been aimed at persuading our present leaders and administrators that today’s working papers are to-morrow’s archive, and should be properly preserved and stored.

A centenary is an excellent time to remind everyone that we have a heritage, which is our common possession. So even if you are not particularly interested yourself, please bear this in mind, and encourage those who are. I am well aware that exhibitions, displays and other junketings will be going on all over Wales this summer – and that they in turn will soon be history. However, I want this general history to provide a central thread. Please feel free to hang your own memories on it.

David Loades
THE COUNTIES/AREAS

Brecon (Brecknock)

Originally the Scouts of Brecknock enjoyed a high profile, because Lord Glanusk lived in the county, and was not only the first County Commissioner but also the first Commissioner for Wales, being appointed to both positions in 1912. The first troop in the County was founded at Ystragynlais in the Swansea Valley before the end of 1908, making it one of the earliest troops in Wales. By the time that Lord Glanusk became County Commissioner there were at least eight other troops in Brecknock, making it one of the strongest Scout Counties in Wales.

Systematic records thereafter are thin until 1952, when the surviving sequence of gazettes begins, but from the early 1930s onwards some of the older troops were celebrating their jubilees, and in 1937, to mark the coronation of George VI, a beacon was lit on the summit of Pen-y-Fan and kept going for ‘over an hour’, which presumably meant carrying quite a lot of fuel Brecknock Scouts helped out regularly at the Royal Welsh show when that became established at Builth Wells. In 1966 a record attendance at the County Rally was proudly noted, and in 1969 the county had over 120 Senior Scouts, which was some 38% of that age-group in the whole of Wales. One of the reasons for this success was the great natural playground of the Brecon Beacons, and the County’s function as host to the innumerable groups and units from all over Britain (and Europe) which came to make use of it. In 1965 the 1st Brecon also acquired the farmhouse at Llwyn Bedoe to use as a base for such expeditions. Welsh jamborees were held at Gwernyfed in 1961, and at Glanusk in 1993, both of which involved major local input. There were royal visits to the county in 1955 and 1981, when the Scouts did their bit as escorts and cheerleaders, and the Chief Scout came in 1972 and 1980.

The Grand Old Man of Brecknock Scouting was Sir Geoffrey Raikes. He became County Commissioner in 1944, and remained in post until 1963, when he became County President. Retiring at the age of 86 in 1972, he died aged 89 in 1975. Capt W.H.N. Legge Bourke, who was County Commissioner from 1979 to 1988, and is presently the President of the Welsh Scout Council, lives at Glanusk.
CARMARTHENSIRE

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 Dryslywn, 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 Llandeibie, 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:

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

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

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 Llanelli, 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 Llanelli; Llandilo; 1st Carmarthen (The Hon Mrs Coventry’s Own); Llandovery; Pwll; Pembrey; Johnstown; 1st and 2nd Ammanford; Abergwili; 5th Carmarthen (South Wales Training College); 3rd Llanelli; Felinfoel; 2nd Carmarthen (St Davids); Tumble; Penygros; 3rd Carmarthen (High School); Manordilo; 5th Llanelli 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 Llanelli, 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 Llanelli 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 Kylsant’s Own) when her husband was created Baron Kylsant 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 Scouter s 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 Scouter s, 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 Llanelli (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 Cynghordy, 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 Llandinat 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 Kyalsant’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 :-
<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Wolf Cubs</th>
<th>Scouts</th>
<th>Rover Scouts</th>
<th>Adult members</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>No. of Groups</th>
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<td>527</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>877</td>
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<td>1943</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>930</td>
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<td>151</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>409</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>119</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Llandovery 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 Cwmamanman 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 Llanelli 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 Llanelli to be used for many Scouting activities and was himself a Wolf Cub with 1st Llanelli 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 Llanelli 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 if 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Beaver Scouts</th>
<th>Cub Scouts</th>
<th>Scouts</th>
<th>Venture Scouts</th>
<th>Adults</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>No. of Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>705</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>1133</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>170</td>
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<td>266</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>1081</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 raining 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 Dinefwr 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 & Cotthi 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
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
Parc Myrddin
Richmond Terrace
Carmarthen SA31 1DS
Tel : 01267 228232
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)
Ceredigion

I. Background.

The Scout Area (formerly Scout County) of Ceredigion in West Wales is fringed by Cardigan Bay on the West, extending from the Dyfi estuary in the North to the Teifi estuary in the South, and is bounded by the Pumlumon uplands in the East and the river Teifi in the South-East. It is essentially a rural area, which like most rural areas in peripheral Britain has experienced prolonged periods of depopulation since the nineteenth century. In the 2001 national population Census, even including a very large body of students at their term-time addresses, it had an estimated population of 75,384, barely exceeding its earlier peak of 73,441 which occurred as long ago as 1871. On top of its steady outward migration of young people, it is a County which has a relatively high elderly retired population, demographic features which may be thought not entirely conducive to Scouting, but in actual fact it has a proud history of Land, Sea and Air Scouts. The presence of Sea Scouting is fitting given the maritime tradition of West Wales, and it and Air Scouting have been able to take advantage of the expertise brought into the Area by the personnel associated with the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Aberporth and the R. A. F. base at Blaenannerch. As a local government area it experienced not only restructuring but also re-naming in the late twentieth century. Until local government reorganization in 1974 it was known as the County of Cardiganshire; thereafter it became the District of Ceredigion within the wider County of Dyfed; then, with the disbanding of Dyfed, it reverted to its County status but retained the name of Ceredigion. In this overview the present name will be generally used throughout for the Scout Area, although in all early documents it was referred to as the "County of Cardiganshire" or just "Cardiganshire" in line with the local government designation.

There are no really large towns in the Area. At the top of the urban hierarchy is Aberystwyth with a population approaching 20,000 when all of its peripheral extensions and its University students are included in the figure, followed by Cardigan, Lampeter, Aberaeron, Llandysul, Tregaron and New Quay. Of these, Cardigan and Lampeter are next in size, with the former having around 4,500 inhabitants and the latter, including its University students, about 3,500. Perhaps special note should be made of the student populations in both Aberystwyth and Lampeter since over the years they have played an active, albeit intermittent, part in Scouting in Ceredigion. The other four towns have populations of under 2,000. All of these places have or have had Scout Groups, together with many smaller settlements in their hinterlands. Among the place-names which crop up over the last century are Borth, Bow Street, Llangynfelin, Penrhyncoch, Llanrhydydd, Goginan and Ystrad Meurig in the North, Llanfair and Cellan near Lampeter, and Aberporth and Parclyn, Llangranog and Cilgerran (in Pembrokeshire) in the South. Also the neighbouring Carmarthenshire town of Newcastle Emlyn, located right on the border with Ceredigion in the Teifi valley, occasionally appeared in the Ceredigion Scout records. Throughout the Area there is a significant Welsh/English bilingual young population which must be catered for by the Scout Association.
In the early days in Ceredigion the administration of Scout Groups was accomplished through Local Associations, with often no or only vague reference to District groupings. Both individual and clusters of neighbouring Groups were registered and re-registered as Local Associations at Headquarters, with the space for the name of the District on the registration forms being left blank. These registrations will be looked at later when dealing with the histories of the Groups, but it is worth mentioning some examples here to show some of the variety of Local Associations which emerged early on. The first registration form was for Aberystwyth in April 1910 which covered "Aberystwyth and radius of 2 miles". This was followed by the formation of the Local Association of Lampeter just before December 1911, which was then superseded in November 1914 by "Lampeter Urban and Lampeter Rural and Tregaron". Lampeter was re-registered again in August 1920 as "Lampeter and surrounding villages". In the Ceredigion records there was a registration for Newcastle Emlyn in December 1924 which included "Newcastle Emlyn [in Carmarthenshire], Adpar [in Cardiganshire] forming the town of Newcastle Emlyn and the surrounding district up to a distance of 3 miles or thereabouts" which accommodated the 24-strong Troop of "Cantref Emlyn" under S. M. Mr. D. Octavious Davies of the National Provincial Bank and A. S. M. Mr. Thomas H. Phillips of the Midland Bank. However, this was not the start, for the County archives for neighbouring Carmarthenshire show that there was a Newcastle Emlyn Troop under S. M. Mr. T. H. Williams of Gwynfryn, Newcastle Emlyn, functioning in September 1913.

Scouting was certainly active through a Local Association in Cardigan town at an early date. It has been recorded by Emlyn Davies et al. (2000, 49) that a Scouts Brigade (known as the ‘Church Scouts’) was in existence by the end of 1908, and that the following year saw the formation of a second Troop which was called the ‘Town Scouts’. These seem to have been the nuclei of the Groups which were registered later. The 1st Cardigan (St. Mary’s) Troop with 40 Scouts was active in September 1912 under S. M. Mr. Thomas F. Baldwin, Empire House, and A. S. Ms. Mr. D. Ladd of Church Street and Mr. L. Jones of Priory Street. However, by the end of 1914 it is probable that both Troops had disappeared. Revival came at the end of the Great War, with the formation of the 3rd Cardigan, and there is evidence that there was also a new lease of life for 1st Cardigan for a surviving registration form from October 1927 for the Cardigan Local Association lists 3rd Cardigan as comprising a Troop of 54-strong under S. M. Mr William J. Portman and 1st Cardigan as a 26-strong Wolf Cub Pack under Cubmistress Miss. M. Evans of the School House, Pendre, Cardigan.

While Local Associations such as these were the main foci for the functioning of Groups it seems from the extant records that in the inter-War years and beyond, the Districts became more formalised in the administration of Scouting, with District Commissioners and District Executive Committees playing an increasingly active role and having a clearer relationship downwards to Groups and upwards to the County Commissioner and County Executive. However, as late as 1977 a letter from the then County Commissioner Mr. D. Mason to Headquarters indicated that there was uncertainty as to the District boundaries - he wrote "the question has arisen as to what exactly are the boundaries between
and asked "whether your registration records show the boundaries of the Districts as they were when registration took place". He was also concerned about the inclusion of communities adjacent to Ceredigion in the Ceredigion Scout County. It was established that three Districts had been registered, namely North, Mid and South. A 'Form A' dated 1981 reveals that the North had been formed in 1910 and reconstituted in 1943, and comprised "All that part of ... Ceredigion [formerly Cardiganshire] lying between: West - the coast of Cardigan Bay; North - the River Dyfi and the boundary of Gwynedd; East - the boundary of Powys; and South - the National Grid line 690 (East/West)". The Mid District was formed "circa 1948" to include "All that part ... lying between: West and North-West - the National Grid line 400 (North/South) and the coast of Cardigan Bay; North - the National Grid line 690 (East/West); East - the boundary of Powys; and South - the River Teifi". The South District had been formed in "1923 and 1954" and covered "All that part ... lying between: North and North-West - the coast of Cardigan Bay; East - the National Grid line 400 (North/South); and on the South - the River Teifi; together with the town of Newcastle Emlyn, and the parish of Saint Dogmaels". In broad terms these Districts comprised the Aberystwyth area in the North, the Lampeter, Llandysul and Aberaeron belt in the middle, and Cardigan town, the lower Teifi and the coastal fringe in the South.

The reason for this surge of interest in the Districts in the late 1970s was that the County Scout Council resolved to restructure its internal administration into two new Districts. In December 1981 the North District was confirmed, retaining its name and receiving a slightly modified Southern boundary; the Mid and South were merged to form the new District of Teifi. This was the structure which was carried forward into the present century, but in 2005 and 2006 moves were made to streamline the administration by disbanding the two District Executive Committees and concentrating business in the hands of the officers of the Area Executive Committee. The two Districts themselves would remain for Scouting purposes, with the equivalent of the District Commissioners continuing to oversee activities in their territories and to liaise with Leaders, Groups and the Area on a regular basis. This new arrangement was approved by the North District Executive Committee in 2006, and, after further discussion, was accepted in Teifi. Given that the Area has a relatively small number of Groups, it was thought that this streamlining was a sensible means of reducing the duplication of administrators across Ceredigion at a time when it was not easy to fill administrative offices when they fell vacant.

III. Groups.

1. North District.

A good reference source for the history of Scouting in the North District is Mr. W. Denis James's booklet "80 Years of Scouting: a History of Scouting in North Ceredigion, 1909 - 1989" (James, 1989). This provides an overall framework for the main events, and this can be filled out with archive material. It is proposed to use these sources to examine the Groups which have been registered, starting with Aberystwyth and then moving on to the smaller communities in its catchment area.
Scouting in Aberystwyth goes back to 1909 with the formation of a Baden Powell Boy Scout Troop under S. M. Mr. J. H. J. Reekie and A. S. M. W. Gilbert Owen. This, the 1st Aberystwyth, was registered in April 1910 (the earliest registration in Ceredigion), with Mr. Tom Owen of Fronhyfiyd, Llanbadarn Road as Chairman and Mr. David Isaac Edwards of 3 Prospect Street as Secretary. Sir Edward Pryce of Plas Gogerddan near Aberystwyth was appointed County Commissioner and was, with Mr. Reekie, active in promoting Scouting throughout the County, with visits to Aberaeron, Cardigan, Newcastle Emlyn, Tregaron and Lampeter.

The 1st Aberystwyth has survived with what seems to have been an unbroken record through to the present, although now known as 3rd Aberystwyth and having experienced some amalgamations on the way. Initially it met at Progress Hall in Mill Street, but by 1925 was using the Drill Hall, Glyndwr Road. In October 1930 the Local Association borrowed £400 from Barclays Bank to purchase a building on the Hospital Road, off North Road, to be used as its headquarters. The official opening of the premises was performed by Lord Swansea, Commissioner for Wales, on 23rd September 1931, in the presence of the County Commissioners from neighbouring Counties, Lord Ystwyth, Lord Lisburne and other dignitaries. The success was such that in 1932 it was decided to form another Troop under S. M. Mr. Geoff Galloway and A. S. M. Mr. D. C. Charman. This became the 2nd Aberystwyth.

However, the finances of the Local Association were not so strong, and things came to a head in 1936 when Barclays Bank requested settlement of its overdraft of £499 and charges. Subsequently, having failed to obtain another mortgage and new guarantors, it relinquished ownership of the headquarters in 1938. By 1940 meetings were being held in a building in Park Avenue. On 30th March 1950 the Local Association agreed to the amalgamation of the 1st and 2nd Aberystwyth to form the 3rd Aberystwyth Scout Group, and on 2nd May it was registered, with its headquarters at 16 Marine Terrace. It had hopes of building its own hut, but then set about raising funds. This was successful and on 3rd May 1952 the new 3rd Aberystwyth headquarters was officially opened in Plas Crug by Mr. C. Wood, from the Scout Association, and Mr. C. W. Berry, the Field Commissioner. However, there were two setbacks ahead. In August 1963 the hut was destroyed by fire and the flags and all records were lost. In January 1968 a new headquarters was completed adjacent to the old site, but on 20th June 1986 it was again badly damaged by fire. After extensive rebuilding work, it was re-opened in February 1989. Like most Groups, from time to time 3rd Aberystwyth has had difficulty in finding Leaders and officers, but it seems to have always managed to overcome its problems, and according to the Census records continued to run Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Ventures, and more recently to house Explorers. When its near neighbour, 4th Aberystwyth, began to encounter difficulties in recruiting new Leaders from about 2000 onwards, and then faced eventual closure, 3rd Aberystwyth was able to absorb its members.

The 4th Aberystwyth was first recorded on 25th November 1955 as a Group sponsored by the Roman Catholic Church, although registration may not have occurred until early the next year. The G. S. M. was named as Thomas Gallagher, The Presbytery, Queen's Road. Its meeting place was the small Church Hall adjacent to St Winifred’s Church, a meeting place it occupied
throughout its life. Like 3rd Aberystwyth, it seems to have had a continuous record, and grew to accommodate Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Ventures, and to run a very varied programme of activities. During the 1980s and 1990s it had an enviable record of participation in camps and outdoor events such as the Malvern Challenge and the Fleming Way Hike. However, it suffered a major setback when its A. G. S. L. tendered his resignation shortly after 2000, and it proved impossible both to find a replacement for him and to recruit other Leaders, despite the best efforts of the stalwarts of the Group. The last entry for the Beaver Colony was in the 2001 Census and thereafter it became increasingly difficult to service the Cubs and Scouts. Eventually in 2006 the decision was taken to close the Group and to merge its members into 3rd Aberystwyth.

Both 3rd and 4th Aberystwyth enjoyed fairly central locations in the town, but other Groups have been formed in what today are contiguous suburban extensions but which originally had village nuclei just outside the main built-up area. These are Llanbadarn Fawr around the Church of St. Padarn on the North side of the Rheidol valley, and Penparcau on the South side of the river Rheidol. The 1st Llanbadarn Fawr had a short but quite active history as a sponsored Group of the Anglican Church (Church in Wales) with its headquarters in the Church Hall. It was registered on 10th December 1951 and functioned for almost two decades. The death knell sounded in October 1969 when the North District Executive Committee reported that 1st Llanbadarn was to close. It finally closed in 1970.

In contrast, Penparcau in spite of a very broken past continues today as an extremely buoyant Group. It started out life as 1st Penparcau when it was registered on 31st March 1943 under S. M. Mr. K. B. Jackson with four Leaders, 17 Cubs and 23 Scouts. However, it closed in 1944, only to re-open with Cubs in 1947 under C. M. Miss. M. Bumford. It closed again in 1959. Closure was short-lived and it re-opened on 11th October 1961 in its Old School headquarters with S. M. Mr A. A. Newman and C. M. Mr JA. Worrall, supervising 7 Scouts and 12 Cubs. The North District Executive Committee of September 1968 reported closure of the Scout Troop but continuation of the Cub Pack. Two years later the Committee meeting of August 1970 indicated that the Cub Pack would be closed in September “owing to the lack of Scouter’s”. Again, closure was short-lived, with the D. C. reporting in October 1973 that a new A. C. S. L. had been appointed for the 1st Penparcau Pack, with its headquarters in the Old School. From the reports given to the District Executive Committee it seems that the Group enjoyed a successful 1980s, until the District AGM of 1989 when it was reported that it had ceased to exist. Membership figures had been entered in the 1988 Census and then there was a lull of a few years until the D. C. announced to the District Executive in October 1992 that Penparcau Cubs had been re-activated, meeting in the Church Hall of St. Anne’s Church. This was the nucleus of 2nd Penparcau which began to grow, and as early as January 1993 it was hoping to set up a Beaver Colony. On 8th March 1993 the 2nd Penparcau was registered as an Open Group, with Mr. Stephen D. Fearn as A. G. S. L., Mr. Paul Manning as B. S. L. and Mr. John Glyn Evans and Mrs. Karen Evans as C. S. Ls. Its first appearance in the Census was in 1994 and from the outset comprised Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, often with waiting lists. The Group has flourished under the
leadership of G. S. L. Mr. Keith Jones with a really full programme of activities, camps and visits, including a trip to the USA in 2001.

Outside Aberystwyth, Groups were formed in communities large and small, some of which were probably too small to attract large numbers of members and Leaders in the long term and consequently had relatively short lives. The three examples of Penrhyncoch, Borth and Tregaron fit the bill as larger settlements which spawned Groups and will be looked at first. Penrhyncoch, a village close to Aberystwyth, has seen considerable expansion since the early 1960s, related in large part to the employment opportunities in Aberystwyth and the Welsh Plant Breeding Station (WPBS), now the Institute for Grassland and Environmental Research (IGER), nearby. On the 1st April 1977 the 1st Penrhyncoch Cub Pack was registered, and fortunately its Minute Books have survived, outlining the operation of the Group through to its demise in 1989. What is particularly interesting is that the Minutes highlight the trials, tribulations and community successes experienced by Groups in villages, over Leaders, finance and accommodation. Initially Penrhyncoch was a Cub Pack but by 1979 there was interest in also forming a Scout Troop. In January 1980 Mr. J. Ward was welcomed as the new Scout Leader, with Margaret Ward as C. L. and Anne Williamson as A. C. L. At its AGM in 1980 it was reported that there were 14 Scouts with 2 ready to join, and 14 Cubs. Over the coming years one of the inevitable problems was the recruitment of Leaders. The Group’s Committee noted the resignation of the A. C. L. in 1981 and stressed that “it was especially important to recruit some assistance to help run the Cub Pack”, and in the AGM of 1981 "Skip requested more help from parents in assisting with the more interesting outdoor activities". At the AGM in 1982 the Group had 18 Scouts and 12 Cubs plus one waiting to be invested. At this stage the Committee was even discussing the purchase of a second-hand hut which was likely to be advertised in the local "Cambrian News" newspaper and investigated a possible site for it in the village. This came to nothing and the Group continued to use the Old Church School with the approval of the Vicar and Church Council. At the AGM in April 1983 there were 16 Scouts and 12 Cubs but it was necessary to make “a general appeal ... for interested people to assist in the running of the Cubs and Scouts". It was noted in the Minutes for November 1983 that the S. L. “was still running the Scout Group on his own and would very much welcome the assistance of a parent”. There were also problems in recruiting parents to the Committee as seen in the AGM Minutes for 1984. While a Treasurer was elected, the posts of Chairman and Secretary had to be left over to a later Committee meeting when they were filled. Despite these sorts of difficulties, it can be said that over the life of the Group the Committee’s efforts were most praiseworthy in seeking grants and support from outside bodies and in organizing its own events to raise money. Letters were sent to many potential sources, including the Development Board for Rural Wales, the Rotary Club, the Round Table, and the Rag Committee of Aberystwyth University, and it helped to run raffles, discos, beetle drives, Job Week and fairs. This is such a familiar tale to all those who have been involved in Scouting! The search for Leaders was a constant theme but eventually it was a losing battle. By November 1987 it seems that Scouts had been discontinued, when a Committee member "suggested trying to get a Scout Group organised in the village again, as there are eight boys due to leave [Cubs] next year, it is a shame if they miss out because there is no Scout pack [Troop] for them to join". At the same time it
was thought that the nearby 3rd and 4th Groups in Aberystwyth were attracting boys from the Penrhyncoch area. The Minutes of March 1989 reported that 11 Cubs were regularly attending, with 7 Cubs expected the following year, but the final entry in the Census of 20 Cubs had appeared the year before in 1988. The last Minutes of the Committee were taken on 10th April 1989, and in the District Executive Committee of February 1990 it was confirmed that the 1st Penrhyncoch Group had closed.

The most resilient Group outside Aberystwyth can be found to the North in the small seaside resort of Borth, which started as 1st Borth and was re-formed as 2nd Borth. The 1st Borth Sea Scouts started in 1910 with Mr Robert Evans as S. M. and 10 Scouts. The meeting place was the Assembly Rooms near the railway station. It seems to have had mixed fortunes over the coming decades but survived through to the end of the Second World War, until its closure in 1948. It re-opened in November 1950 with 15 Scouts and 15 Cubs, only to lapse again in the later 1950s, though closure was short and in January 1960 it reappeared at its headquarters in Upper Borth School with 12 Sea Scouts and 14 Cubs. Closure followed again in 1969, and in August 1970 the District Executive Committee "agreed that enquiries be made regarding the money in hand should 1st Borth Troop not re-open". However, on 5th March 1973 the 2nd Borth was registered with its headquarters in the Church School, and in June 1976 it went on to occupy a new headquarters near the playing fields. Thereafter 2nd Borth continued to appear in the Census record and on occasion had Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Ventures and later Explorers. However it was dogged by Leadership problems. A low point was reached in the mid–1990s when the District Executive Committee reported that it no longer had a Beaver Colony, that the Cub Pack was much weaker and that a new Leader was required for the Scouts who were then being led by two ex-Scouts from 2nd Borth and 4th Aberystwyth. Since then its fortunes have been revived again under the Leadership of Mrs. C. Millichamp. Although the Beaver Colony has not been reinstated, it has maintained an active programme for the other Sections.

The third example in a large rural community in the North District, indeed it can be described as a small market town, is that of Tregaron, formerly in the Mid-Cardiganshire Scout District. It may well have had a Scout Group as early as 1914 when it appeared in the Local Association registration for "Lampeter Urban and Lampeter Rural and Tregaron" but there is no confirmation. The 1st Tregaron Group certainly functioned in the old Mid-Cardiganshire District but it seems to have had a patchy record, with starts and stops. For instance, it was entered in the annual Censuses in the 1960s, but then lapsed. Consideration was given to reviving it in the late 1970s by the Mid-Cardiganshire District Executive Committee, but its conclusion in March 1980 was that "there was no prospect of this being formed, and it was felt that it would be unwise to start a Group there unless there was a really good chance of success". It next appeared in 1984, having been re-registered as a Group in the North District. A report to the District Executive Committee in February 1984 indicated that the new Cub Scout Pack had two Leaders, 10 boys and a Group Committee. Over the next few years it was represented at District meetings, but at the District AGM in April 1987 it was confirmed that the Cub Scout Pack was dormant, this being the year of the last entry in the Census. Later there were discussions about restarting in Tregaron,
and a promotional meeting was held in Tregaron School, but these came to nothing.

Besides Penrhyncoch, Borth and Tregaron, outside Aberystwyth there were many other starters, but for some of these there are very few records. For instance, reference has been found in the Carmarthenshire Record Office to the Gogerddan Troop (as mentioned earlier, Gogerddan was the country estate of the Pryce family near Aberystwyth) as early as 1912, comprising 23 Scouts under S. M. Mr. J. Davies of Rhydypennau School, Bow Street, and A. S. M. Mr. Elvin Richards of Penrhyncoch. Sir Edward Pryce of Gogerddan, in common with so many of the landed gentry, gave his wholehearted support to the Scout Movement, and it seems that the headquarters of this Troop was in Lady Pryce’s School, Bow Street. This early start warrants further investigation.

Scouting was to reappear again in Bow Street much later. In April 1967 the D. C. reported that a new Group had been formed, namely the 1st Bow Street, with Mr. Lindop and two Seniors as the Scouters, with a strength of 31 Scouts. Further, it was hoped to start a Cub Pack shortly as a lady had volunteered to become Cubmistress. The Village Hall was used as the headquarters, but it was noted that there were problems from the outset, including forming a Parents Committee. Whatever various difficulties were being faced by this embryonic Group they proved to be insurmountable. While 1st Bow Street gave reports to the District Executive Committee on 1st February and 14th March 1968, the D. C. reported its closure to the Executive on 18th September 1968, and the only entry in the Annual Census was for 1968.

Also North of Aberystwyth, a Group was formed in Llangynfelin. On 18th October 1977 the 1st Llangynfelin was registered with its headquarters in the School, with C. S. L. Mrs. J. I. Evans and 12 Cubs. It was entered in the Annual Censuses for 1978 to 1982, inclusive. Unfortunately, it was short-lived and closed in 1983.

From time to time other villages came under consideration. In July 1943 the village of Tre’rddol appeared on a registration form but no record has been found of it having opened. Earlier in that year it had been intimated that it would be "registered as a Group in the near future and to be known as 4th North Cardiganshire". In the District Executive Committee of August 1970 the D. C. indicated that he had received requests to open Troops at Talybont and Abermad School (a small private school located off the road from Llanfarian to Llanilar). It seems that these requests came to nothing.

South of Aberystwyth a Group was established in the small coastal village of Llanrhystud. The 1st Llanrhystud was registered on 5th October 1979, with its headquarters in the Village Hall. It comprised a C. S. L. with 10 Cubs. While there is little information on its progress, what is clear is that it did operate for a few years. It was represented at meetings of the District Executive Committee in June and November 1986, but the D. C. reported to the Executive in June 1988 that "due to the resignation of the C. S. L., 1st Llanrhystud was now dormant", and this was duly reported to the AGM in May 1989. It was recorded in the Annual Census figures from 1980 to 1988, with one "dormant" entry for 1983. Its final complement in 1988 was 15 Cubs.
At some distance inland of Aberystwyth, in a fairly sparsely populated rural area with a scattered catchment, Ystrad Meurig became the base for a Group. On 9th April 1980 the 1st Ystrad Meurig was registered with its headquarters in the Church Hall, consisting of G. S. L. W. M. C. Lewis, C. S. L. Mrs. G. Leach, and 12 Cubs. However, it seems to have had a tortuous existence over a very short life for soon afterwards, in October 1982, the District Executive Committee noted that the Ystrad Meurig Scout Group would be re-opening! The Executive of November 1984 observed that "Ystrad Meurig has severe Leader problems", but they were overcome in the short term and by June 1985 the D. C. was able to report that the Cub Scout Pack had re-started with 14 members. Again it was not to last, and at the District AGM in April 1986 the D. C. notified the closure of 1st Ystrad Meurig. Overall, the Group only appeared in the Census records from 1981 to 1984, inclusive.

Another short-lived Group had been formed earlier, in the village of Goginan to the East of Aberystwyth. There is no detailed information on its operation but it was recorded in the Censuses for 1959, 1960 and 1961. Thereafter it disappeared from the records.

In addition to these Groups attention must be drawn to the Rover Crew of Aberystwyth University and to the Rovers and other senior Sections in North Ceredigion. These appeared intermittently in the Censuses, and include most recently Explorers and Network Scouts, but to date no precise records of their activities have been found. The same can be said of SSAGO in Aberystwyth University, reference to which crops up from time to time in the Minutes of the District Executive Committee. However, there is no doubt that University students have played an active - albeit temporary - part in the Leadership of local Groups in and around the Aberystwyth area, and have contributed to both District and Area Committees and activities.

Another feature of the profile of the North District was a Fellowship Section, but it was short-lived. It was formed in the late 1980s with a small membership, and in April 1992 it was agreed that it should have representation on the District Executive Committee. From then on the Minutes contain accounts of its activities, including walks, talks and social gatherings, helping out at District events like the Carol Service, and fund raising, for example, through coffee mornings. However, numbers remained small and early in 2000, when its membership had dropped to only 4, it was disbanded, with its funds going to the District. It was duly reported to the District Executive Committee in May 2004 that there was no activity in the Fellowship.

While helping to support the Groups in their Scouting activities, the District Executive Committee has played a positive part in trying to foster good social relations between Groups, administrators, parents and, indeed, the wider community. Its work is exemplified in its help over the years in the organization of District Fairs, in Gang Shows at the old King’s Hall, Aberystwyth, and in social events. A good indication of the general camaraderie was the success achieved by the 80th Anniversary Sub-Committee to celebrate eighty years of Scouting in the District. This included a celebration dinner at the Marine Hotel, Aberystwyth, on 13th October 1989, a Thanksgiving Service, an Anniversary Commemorative
Badge and T-shirt, a Celebratory Camp, and the publication of Mr. Denis James’s "80 Years of Scouting". Although the District Executive Committee no longer exists as an administrative body, the District still has a Social Secretary, Mrs Leoncia Slay, who will continue to foster good social relations, and it retains its Appointments Sub-Committee, with Mrs Judith Bray serving as its Secretary.

2. Teifi District.

The Teifi District of South Ceredigion can claim the distinction of having had Land, Sea and Air Scouts in its territory, a good record for a rural area with small market towns and a scattered population. It also has a University in its midst at Lampeter - formerly the Anglican (Church in Wales) St. David’s College - which over the years has made a contribution to Scouting in Lampeter through its Rover and Venture Groups and SSAGO. As in the North District, however, these organizations do not seem to have left much in the way of records and have been intermittent in their operation, sometimes being particularly active, and at other times dormant.

The District differs from the North in having quite a lot of small towns which have all supported Groups. Cardigan is the principal town, but on the coast are the small ports cum resorts of New Quay and Aberaeron, and along the Teifi valley are Newcastle Emlyn, Llandysul and Lampeter. Outside these are a number of villages which have contained Scout Groups, such as Aberporth on the coast to the North of Cardigan. It is proposed to look first at the urban communities and then to move on to the outlying settlements, some of which were involved in Scouting for only very short periods.

It has been noted already that the town of Cardigan had an early start with its ‘Church’ and ‘Town’ Scouts which were the nuclei of the 1st and 2nd Cardigan Groups. These functioned, perhaps sporadically, until 1914. After the First World War, in 1919 (Emlyn Davies et al., 2000, 49) the Cardigan Local Association registered the 3rd Cardigan and this was to become the long-term mainstay of Scouting in the town as the 3rd Cardigan Sea Scout Group, but it was to experience significant breaks in its operation. For instance, it may well have experienced a lull in the early 1920s for a registration form dated October 1927 gives the date of formation of the 3rd Cardigan as May 1923, perhaps indicating a break sometime after the 1919 registration. It had a fragmented life through to the end of the Second World War, but it always seems to have been able to emerge from its dormant phases. On a registration form for March 1954 it was the only Group named for quite a large area "extending 10 miles to the North, 5 miles to the West and 3 miles to the South of the Town of Cardigan and includes the following places: Cardigan, Aberporth, Blaenporth, Tresaith, Rhydlewis, Cilgerran, Llechryd, Llangoedmore, St. Dogmaels". Again, though, it was to lapse. In the 1957 Census there is a note "3rd Cardigan cancelled, must re-register". Yet it was back in operation in 1958 with 10 Scouts, but with only 3 Scouts in 1959. However, its registration was then cancelled, the reason given being "lack of Scouters". It was missing from the Annual Census returns from 1960 to 1965, inclusive, and again had a broken profile after that. It was not until 1973 and onwards that it can be said that it had a continuous presence in the District. From 1989 onwards it ran a full complement of Beavers, Cubs and Scouts and went on to support Ventures.
Turning to the next largest town, Lampeter, we are fortunate in having in the records a typescript written in 1988 by the Rev. Canon Peter Morris on "Scouting in Lampeter". He has traced the foundation there to have been between May and December 1911. In the early days, as in so many instances throughout Britain, support was given by leading figures in the community, such as the local landowners J. C. Harford and H. Davies Evans, and the Rev. J. Footman, headmaster of St. David's College School. It is apparent that some students from the College Rovers were involved as Leaders in the 1st Lampeter Troop. Whether the Troop had an unbroken existence in its formative years cannot be established, but from photographic and other evidence it can be shown that Scouts were active in and around Lampeter in many of the years between 1911 and 1920, after which some Minute Books have survived. In May 1920 a meeting was held to re-form the Boy Scout Group which had probably faltered at the end of the First World War, and again local worthies were prominent with their backing. In September 1925 the Group comprised a Scout Troop of 12 and a Cub Pack of 8, and in 1927 16 and 8, respectively. From the Minutes it can be seen that there was a full programme of training, camping and fund-raising, but there are some comments which suggest a few incidents of bad language and behaviour. The decade 1920 to 1930 was successful for Cubs and Scouts, and they gained further support from a strong Rover Crew in the College. The following decade seems to have been equally buoyant (although attendance at the AGMs was disappointing), and despite the onset of the Second World War, Scouting continued until 1943. The 1943 meeting of the Group Committee was the last until 1956. It is likely that Scouting ceased when Mrs. Morris, the Cubmistress for many years, moved away and other Leaders were serving in the Armed Forces. The Group had lost its meeting place, the Old Grammar School, when it had been requisitioned by the Army, but at least that problem had been overcome when the Group was offered Timothy’s Billiard Room (which became the Lampeter Men’s Institute) for its meetings.

After a gap of about a dozen years, a meeting was held on 28th May 1956 in the British Legion Hall which confirmed that the Lampeter Group had re-opened with 28 boys in the Scout Troop under Mr. Alan Young, and 38 in the Cub Pack under Mr. W. G. Roberts. The Group resumed its occupation of the Old Grammar School, and was even able to draw on the £43. 11. 2 from the former Local Association. With only a few breaks, it seems to have had a long run over the coming decades, though not without its weak periods. A particularly low point was reached in the early 1970s as revealed in a submission by the G. S. M. Mr. Mee to the Mid District Executive: "Those of you who have been associated with the Lampeter Scout Group for some years will know that from time to time, we have had cause for despondency, but never in the 15 years I have been here have things been so disappointing as they are now. Although word has been passed around that Scout meetings were due to restart after the summer no one but the Scout Leaders attended the first two. The position with the Cubs has been very little different and the Cub Leaders have detected the same could not care less attitude to such an extent that on occasion they abandoned the meeting because the boys were so unruly. Such a thing has never happened before". This led to a short suspension of the Scout Troop. What seems to have created much discussion and effort for Lampeter and the Mid District Executive in the 1970s was accommodation for the 1st Lampeter. Funds were required for the restoration of the Old Grammar School and much effort was expended on
trying to sort out the terms of its tenancy and to raise money. The Mid District Executive Minutes are dominated by these considerations. However, the 1st Lampeter survived the tribulations of the 1970s and entered the 1980s as a Group within the new Teifi District. It lacked a Beaver Colony in the late 1980s and early 1990s but from 1993 to 1998 it ran Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. The Beavers fell away again but it continued with its Cubs and Scouts from 1999 onwards, and it recorded Ventures in the Censuses of 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1998.

As in the case of Lampeter, there is a useful typescript on the early history of Scouting in New Quay. This is "1st New Quay Scout Group, History and Log Book, 1913-1981" written by Mrs. Mary Insull. Scouting there can be traced back to 1913 when the 1st New Quay Troop of Land Scouts was formed. It met in a warehouse type of building which stood on the site of the later Captain’s Table restaurant. It continued through the First World War, but was disbanded about 1919 or 1920, only to be revived for a year or two in 1921 by the local Curate. It was re-formed again in 1925 as Sea Scouts with three Leaders and about thirty Scouts in four Patrols of Curlews, Peewits, Seals and Beavers. The Group records show that it had a wide range of activities, which included drill, Morse, semaphore, rifle drill, boxing, badge work, camping and boating. It had its own clinker-built four-oared gig, named "Restless", which came from a minesweeper which was being broken up for scrap. Its meeting place was the pavilion of the New Quay Bowling Club. As in the founding of so many early Groups, much support came from local dignitaries, such as Colonel Whitaker of Llanina mansion on whose land they often camped.

The Troop was disbanded about the start of the Second World War and lay dormant for many years until it was re-formed yet again in 1977 with Cubs and Scouts. At first the meeting place was the New Quay Yacht Club, which gave the use of an "Albacore" sailing dinghy. The Group also acquired the "Sully Queen", a 22 ft. clinker-built launch with an inboard engine, and later, on long loan, the "Agir", a 17 ft. clinker-built Norwegian dory with four long oars. In 1978 the 1st New Quay lost the use of the Yacht Club and the sailing dinghy, but was able to find a temporary new home in the small changing room of New Quay Football Club. It seems that use was also made of the Memorial Hall and the Church Hall for various events and activities, but it was generally necessary to store equipment in private homes. At this time it was decided to start a building fund for its own headquarters on a site to be provided by New Quay Town Council. Undoubtedly, at the turn of the decade there was great enthusiasm for this new venture, and the records kept by the late Mrs. Mary Insull of Cross Inn (one of the stalwarts of Scouting in Ceredigion) show that the Group itself was not only trying to raise money but was also very busy in Scouting in and around the town (for instance, with its work at the New Quay Bird Hospital) and in its participation with other Groups in and beyond Ceredigion. However, this success was relatively short-lived and the Group was closed in 1985 when the original Leaders moved away from the area and replacements could not be found. Efforts were made to re-kindle interest, and a Cub Pack of 12 was recorded in the 1988 Census, but then there was a gap of nine years before a new start was made with the registration of the 2nd New Quay and Llanarth Air Scout Group under G. S. L. Mr. Alan Tapping, B. S. L. Linda Nicolaysen, and C. S. L. Mrs. Carole
Tapping. The Group was strong at the outset and from its first appearance in the 1998 Census it recorded Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Ventures.

It is not known precisely when Scouting started in the nearby town of Aberaeron, but it was certainly at an early date. James (1989) noted that when the 1st Aberystwyth Scouts were camping at Gogerddan in 1912, Scouts from Aberaeron were also camping there. From various sources it can be shown that, with stops and starts, the Aberaeron Group functioned in the old Mid District (although on occasion it was actually thought of, incorrectly, as a Group in the North District, as in the 1957 Census). Initially it was the 1st Aberaeron, but was later re-registered as the 2nd Aberaeron. While it had a broken record before the Second World War, from the late 1950s it showed relatively long-term stability. The Annual Censuses show that from the 1950s it had an almost continuous presence in the town, but seems to have experienced real difficulties in recruiting Leaders for its various Sections, and this was to lead to its eventual downfall. By the late 1980s it had been reduced to Cubs; Scouts accompanied the Cubs for one year in 1992; then it reverted to Cubs only until Scouts reappeared from 1996 to 2000; in 2001 it was again reduced to Cubs only; and in 2002 both Beavers and Cubs were present but there was no Scout Troop. However, the entry for the 2003 Census was "nil", which marked the end of the 2nd Aberaeron Group. Despite discussion and encouragement at the District and Area levels, it proved impossible to re-start activities in the town.

The small town of Llandysul in the Teifi valley also has a long history of Scouting which started well before the Second World War, but the precise date is not known. In Morris’s study of Lampeter (1988) it was noted that there was an established Cub Pack in Llandysul which in 1941 was facing the difficulty that the Cubmistress, Miss. Campbell Davies, had joined the Women’s Land Service and would be leaving. As it turned out a successor was found in a Miss. Angus who continued activities. However, there was a lull after the War which seems to have lasted through most of the 1950s and 1960s, and it was not until 1974 that the 1st Llandysul Group gained a firm foothold in the Census. It then had a continuous record and, like Lampeter, became a Group in the newly formed Teifi District in the early 1980s. The Annual Censuses show that it had Cubs and Scouts until 1994, when they were joined by a Beaver Colony. As it grew, the Group also supported Ventures.

The town of Newcastle Emlyn is something of an enigma in that it is located in Carmarthenshire but has often appeared in Ceredigion’s Scouting profile on the strength, no doubt, of its substantial catchment in Ceredigion and its distance from the County town of Carmarthen. As noted before, the Troop of "Cantref Emlyn" in Newcastle Emlyn appeared in the Ceredigion records in December 1924, but Scouting had an earlier start there in at least 1913, as revealed by the Carmarthenshire records. Since the pre-First World War period it does not seem to have figured in the history of Ceredigion until the very recent past, although this is something which warrants more research. Certainly, it does not appear in the Census records for Ceredigion from the 1950s through to 1988. However, in the 1989 Annual Census it re-entered the picture, but this time in the form of the 1st Felindre and Newcastle Emlyn Group, Felindre being a village in Carmarthenshire near the town. It started with Cubs as shown by the Censuses
for 1989 to 1992, inclusive; these were joined by Scouts in 1993; and from 1994 onwards it has accommodated Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, and has supported Ventures. So, in a relatively short time, the Teifi District has seen the growth of a thriving Group on its borders.

Turning from the towns to the surrounding villages, the community of Aberporth just North of Cardigan has had one of the strongest outlying Groups since the Second World War. This is the 1st Aberporth and Parclyn Air Group. It probably began after the War but then seems to have lapsed, with a note in the 1957 Census indicating that it would be re-registered. It did not appear in the 1958 Census, but surfaced again in 1959. Its strongest period appears to have been between 1990 and 1998 when it had Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, but from then on it entered a very uncertain phase with, for example, only Scouts in 1999, only Beavers and Cubs in 2001 and 2002, just Beavers in 2003, and only Cubs in 2004. Nonetheless, its record is much more robust over a longer period than many others outside the main towns.

Another coastal village further north again was the home of the 1st Llangranog. There is a registration form dated 17th July 1950 for the Local Association of Llangranog, which indicates that the 1st Llangranog Group was formed in April 1950. It actually names two Groups, namely 1st Llangranog itself (with registration number 28170) and 1st Llanina (registration number 28171). While some information has been found for the former, Llanina must await further research, though it is possible it was a speculative registration and did not function. The Llangranog Group operated during the 1950s but it ceased to exist from April 1959 due to a "lack of Scouters", the same affliction which hit 3rd Cardigan at the same time.

As in the North District, starts were made in some other quite small rural communities. For example, there was a Group in Llanfair and Cellan near Lampeter. The precise start date is uncertain, but it was active in the Censuses for 1959 and 1960 and then stopped. This Group seems to have been the initiative of Mr. Mee who became the G. S. M. at Lampeter. When he became disillusioned by some of the apathy he encountered in Lampeter in the early 1970s, he wrote fondly of the 1st Llanfair and Cellan Troop in his submission to the Mid District Executive in October 1972: "The boys in those days travelled on bikes or foot a distance of up to 7 miles to meetings and no one travelled less than 2 miles. We had no funds and very poor camping equipment and yet those boys had a great deal of fun from their Scouting".

From correspondence dating from late 1981 between the C. C. Mr. Donald Mason and Mrs. Mary Insull, then Secretary of the South District Executive, there was a proposal to start a 1st Cenarth Group with a Cub Pack, but no records have been found to suggest that the Group was ever set up. What is clear is that another community in the lower Teifi valley, Cilgerran, did have a Group. This is confirmed by the entry of the 1st Cilgerran in the Annual Censuses for 1958 and 1959. It may have had a slightly earlier start for a note in the Census for 1957 claimed that 1st Cilgerran "still needs re-registration", which could mean that there had been an earlier abortive attempt to establish a Group there. However, the
Group did not continue beyond 1959, the stated reason for its closure being, as in so many cases, a "lack of Scouters".

At the risk of repeating what has already been said for the North District, Teifi District - and most notably Lampeter - has been able to draw some support from University students, going right back to the days of the Rover Crews at St. David's College. Scouting has been a feature of student life in Teifi for as long as many of its Scout Groups, but its presence over time has been quite fragmented. As mentioned already in the context of individual Scout Groups, the District too has seen the setting up of Venture, Explorer and Network Units. However, it has not been possible to locate the Minutes and correspondence for these senior Sections - but, then again, such records may not even exist!

The District Executive Committee itself, in addition to its regular administrative involvement with Groups, has helped in fund raising and in trying to foster social cohesion within Teifi, as illustrated by the support given to the successful Gang Shows which were held in Cardigan in 1986 and 1989. Although seeing the loss of its District Executive Committee and its associated duties under the new administrative structure for the Ceredigion Scout Area, as in the North District, Teifi will continue to maintain an Appointments Sub-Committee.

**IV. Conclusion.**

Given all of the comings and goings which have occurred in the two Districts since the early 1900s, perhaps we are not left with a clear overall picture of what exists today, of what has been carried forward into the Centenary Year, so this conclusion will be used to present an up-to-date summary, drawing on the Annual Census data for 2007. In the North, there are three active Groups in Aberystwyth, Borth and Penparcau. The 3rd Aberystwyth has Beavers (numbering 16), Cubs (28, in two packs one of which is fully bilingual) and Scouts (13), making a total youth membership of 57. In 2nd Borth there are Cubs (16) and Scouts (16), giving a total of 32. The 2nd Penparcau Group has 19 Beavers, 23 Cubs and 21 Scouts, with an overall total of 63. In addition the District has 34 Explorer Scouts. Today the Teifi District comprises six active Groups. The 1st Lampeter has 1 Beaver, 8 Cubs and 10 Scouts, making an overall membership of 19. In Cardigan the 3rd Group has 8 Beavers, 10 Cubs and 7 Scouts, totalling 25. The 1st Llandysul also has Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, with 11, 26 and 7, respectively, making 44 in total. The 1st Felindre and Newcastle Emlyn has contracted to a single Scout Troop of 10, and 1st Aberporth and Parclyn has a Cub Pack of 12. Finally, the 2nd New Quay and Llanarth is buoyant with 18 Beavers, 16 Cubs and 13 Scouts, giving a membership of 47. The Teifi District also has 14 Explorer Scouts. Over the two Districts, the total youth membership is 359. These members are supported by an adult team, encompassing Commissioners, Leaders, Advisors and Administrators, of 79 across the Ceredigion Scout Area. It is the enthusiasm, skill and voluntary effort of people like these which will be depended on to carry forward the Scouting ethos to young people in the second century of the Scout Movement.
References


All of the other sources used here can be found in the Ceredigion Archives Department, some of which were deposited when this was being written and have not yet been catalogued. Information relating to Scouting in Ceredigion (including runs of Census data, Minute Books, miscellaneous correspondence, registration forms) is contained in Section D/SO of the Catalogue.

Among the sources consulted there are the following works written by other authors, namely


Roy Lewis


With acknowledgements to the late Professor Desmond Slay and Mrs. Leontia Slay.
Clwyd

Wrexham

Scouting came to Wrexham because Robert Baden Powell spoke at the Drill Hall in Peyser Street in January 1908. His subject was ‘The Scouting Game’, and many in the packed hall were enthused by his vision. Over the next two years a number of troops were formed, mostly sponsored and encouraged by local worthies. The 1st Wrexham was made possible by F.W. Soames, who owned the local brewery, and provided a meeting room on his business premises. Similarly the 1st Rhosnessney was patronised by Sir Foster Cunliffe of Acton Park, and was originally known as ‘Sir Foster Cunliffe’s Own’. The 1st Chirk owed its existence to Lady Trevor, and the 1st Overton to the agent of the Bryn-y-Lys Estate, A.J.P. Child, who lived in Overton. By 1910 there were enough troops, and enough enthusiasm for Wrexham and Llangollen both to form Local Associations, which would later to known as Districts. In May of that year Baden Powell (now Sir Robert and Chief Scout), returned to North Wales and inspected rallies of Scouts both at Hawarden and at Caernarfon.

The number of troops continued to expand until the war of 1914-18, took many leaders and not a few Scouts into the armed forces, a distressing number of whom never returned. ‘The Scouts Book of Heroes’ (a typical flourish of the time) records the achievements of some of those who joined up: Edward Davies, George Randles and J.H. Randles, all of the 1st Gresford, received the Meritorious Service Medal, Ralph Bonfoy of the same troop the Croix de Guerre, and Edward Roberts of the 1st Rossett the Military Medal. At a more local level, but equally deserving the Scout magazine of 21st September 1918 recorded the award of the Scout Gilt Cross to Second R.A. Roberts for his brave conduct at a fire in the neighbourhood.

Rather unusually, the records of the Second World War, where overall casualties were less severe, make in terms of Wrexham Scouting, rather sadder reading than the First. In 1941 Eric Williams, formerly a PL in the 1st Chirk, was awarded the DFM while serving as an air gunner, but was killed shortly after the award, an event which was recorded in The Scouter. The following year the Roll of Honour in the same magazine recorded the deaths of C.V. Williams and W. Roberts, both formerly of the 1st Chirk, and J.R. Stace of the 1st Wrexham. Very different but equally sad was another report of 1941 that Ivor Moore of the Hope and Caergwale Church Group had been posthumously awarded the Cornwell Scout Medal. The circumstances of his death are not recorded.

On a much more cheerful note, in 1948 the 1st Cefn Mawr Group decided to build their own headquarters. They purchased an acre of land, and set about the task. In a year and a half the Group Committee had raised £480, and received a gift of 20,000 used bricks. These had to be cleaned up, which the Scouts did with the help of some other volunteers, and then laid. For this purpose several professional bricklayers gave their services free, and the building was duly
opened in the autumn of 1950 – at which point the achievement was reported in *The Scouter*.

Between 1956 and 2000 Wrexham District ran 23 Gang Shows, which raised substantial funds to support Scouting in the District.

On the 18th September 1967 W.G. Briffa took part in a river rescue in the Dee estuary, for which he was awarded the Royal Humane Society’s medal.

In 1978 the exchange visits with Germany, which still continue, were instituted. In that year a party of ten Scouts visited Wrexham’s twin town of Markischer Kreis, and received their German friends in return.

Ron Edwards, who contributed these notes, adds

'Scouting in this part of the Country continues to thrive, and the Scout movement keeps pace with modern trends, but the founder’s basic ideas still keep youngsters wanting to join in. We still offer the outdoors adventure, various activities and team work in a mix which no other youth movement can equal'.
Conwy

From the beginning of Scouting in 1908 until 1974, the area which is currently Conwy County Borough was shared between the old counties of Caernarfonshire and Denbighshire, with the River Conwy marking the boundary between them. The Scout County of Denbighshire was divided into East and West in 1913, while Caernarvonshire was divided into North and South in 1929. From North Caernarvonshire the old Scout districts of Llanfairfechan, Conway, Llandudno and Conway Valley are now within the new District of Conwy Borough, while West Denbighshire has contributed the former districts of Llanrwst, Colwyn Bay and Abergele. In 1974 Local Government reorganisation created the new counties of Gwynedd and Clwyd. This division was followed by the scout movement, with the river Conwy forming the boundary, as before. At that stage there were three districts, Aberconwy and Llandudno in Gwynedd and Abergele in Clwyd. However in 1994 Conwy Borough became a county in its own right, and in Scouting terms was absorbed by the new county (or Area) of Eryri y Ynys Mon. At first Conwy was divided into two Scout districts, but since 1999 there has been just one, which corresponds to the Local Government Area.

The first Scout troop in Conway (known at the time as ‘Baden Powell Scouts’) was formed early in 1910 as a result of a number of boys reading the original serial version of Scouting for Boys. Inspired by BP’s ideas they decided to form a scout patrol, and met at first in the open air at Cadnant Park, just outside the town (and now built over). If the weather was bad they took refuge in the cellar under St John’s English Methodist Church in Rosehill Street. The boys persuaded Mr William Ralphs to give them training in first aid, and he in turn persuaded a Mr Waterhouse of Cadnant Park to become the first Scoutmaster. One of the founder members of this first troop was Bobby Williams, and it was his family, which owned the curious building known as the ‘round room’, which had been built originally as a dog and cock pit, who made it available for the Scout Troop. It still stands, and has been used for all sorts of things in its time from a Liberal Club to a chapel of rest, but it was for a time a Scout Headquarters. Now it is behind Alfredo’s restaurant in Lancaster Square. The names of several founder members of this troop are known, and one of them was William’s son, Frank Ralphs, who in later years was to become synonymous with Scouting in Conway. As an ASM Frank attended the first World jamboree at Olympia, and subsequently went to Arrowe Park (1929), Holland (1937) and France (1948).

During the First World war the Scouts ‘did their bit’ as orderlies and messengers, looked after refugees and (we are told) guarded bridges. Several were awarded the Scout war service Badge for their efforts. Frank Ralphs had joined up in 1916, and when he returned to Conway in 1919 became an Assistant Scout Master. The Scoutmaster since 1912 had been W.G. McMurry, and photographs survive of the military style camps which he conducted at that time. In 1915 the Chief Scout visited the area, and Mr. McMurry no doubt mustered his scouts for the inevitable inspection which then took place. In 1918 the wolf Cub Pack was
formed McMurry subsequently served as District Commissioner, being succeeded in 1942 by none other than Frank Ralphs.

By 1920, and now registered as the 1st Conway Troop, there were seventeen Scouts on the roll, and the Wolf Cub Pack in attendance. It was reported to the District Association that fourteen of these Scouts had attained the 2nd class badge, while six had reached first class standard. Forty two proficiency badges had also been earned, embracing thirteen different skills, from Ambulance Man to Engineer During the year the troop had helped out their neighbours, the 1st Llandudno Junction Troop with a fundraising effort, and had been runners up in the County Shield Competition. Scouting clearly existed on a institutional basis in the region by this time. It was also reported that there had been several expeditions to Snowdon, and that some of the older boys had successfully installed a wireless receiving set in the Headquarters – no mean achievement in 1920!

On the 6th May 1935 the Troop built and lit a beacon on Conway Mountain to celebrate the Royal Jubilee, and attended a thanksgiving service in the grounds of Conway castle. Generally the records of the 1930s are thin, but it is worth noting that the 1st Conway has enjoyed a continuous existence from 1910 to the present day, even if we have only notes of the names of King’s Scouts against some years. The record of achievement was continuous. After the war, the 1st moved its base several time, locating at one time in the Town Hall, and at another under the harbourmaster’s office on the Quay. Finally, after a great deal of effort and fundraising, some land on the edge of Morfa Bach Car Park was rented from the Town Council on a long lease, and the headquarters erected which is still in use. Frank Ralphs had retired by that time, but still appeared with his sister Violet (Akela 1943-1969), in uniform for the opening of the new headquarters on 13th May 1967.

The Group continued to do well in the 1970s and early 80s, led first by Philip Jones-Williams and then by Ray Castle, but by 1987 falling numbers forced the closure of the troop, and subsequent attempts to revive it have proved unsuccessful. The Cub Pack, however, continues to flourish, and was joined in 1988 by a Beaver Colony. The Beavers have now gone back to meeting at St Johns Methodist Church, but the Cubs continue to use the Scout headquarter. Recently the 1st has joined forces with the Deganwy, Llandudno Junction and Glanconwy Groups, and the pack supplies recruits for the new Aberconwy Group, who meet in their own Headquarter in Glanconwy. This works exceptionally well because there are a large number of boys and girls in the group, and economies of scale apply.

There have in the past been other Groups in Conwy, but only the 1st has survived, in any sense. During the early 1930s there was for a few years a group known as the 1st Gyffin. Gyffin is a hamlet on the road to Llanrwst, and very little is known about the scouts, except that the first (and probably the only) Scoutmaster was the Rev. W.R. Roberts. It was no doubt his brainchild, and ceased when he left. During the Second World War there was also a 2nd Conway, whose formation was recorded in the minutes of the District A.G.M. for 1942. It was associated with St Michael’s Roman Catholic Church, and seems to
have consisted mainly of evacuees. For that reason it probably closed at the end of the war, because no further references to it have been found.

Llandudno Junction (so called because it grew up around the railway station), has seen three (or possibly four) Scout Groups over the past 100 years. The doubt is caused because of the brief appearance of the so-called Nant-y-Coed Scouts in November 1935. Nothing is known about them, and they seem never to have been registered. The 1st Llandudno Junction was established in 1921. Sponsored by the railway company, this was known as ‘the L.M.S. troop’, but nothing seems to be recorded of its activities, nor how long it lasted. The 2nd was established at Plas Blodwell Children’s Home in February 1925, and expired at some point between 1935 and the outbreak of war. The only Group with any durability is the 3rd, registered on the 8th March 1943 in association with the English Presbyterian Church. For a number of years this was a highly successful Group, well known for its smartness and high standards. During the 1970s and 1980s it provided the District with several commissioners and other officers, but it suffered thereafter from the decline of the church, which had been very supportive. Leaders were particularly hard to find, and by 2006 there was only the Cub Pack left. This, however, shows every sign of flourishing, and is presently feeding into the Aberconwy Troop, along with the 1st Conwy.

The Aberconwy Group came into existence in April 2002 as the result of a merger between the 1st Glan Conway (which had existed between 1948 and 1955 and reformed in 1976), the 2nd Deganwy (registered in 1988) and the 1st Eglwysbach (registered in 1979). Deganwy had leaders, but no where to meet, and Glan Conway had a fine headquarters but no leaders. Eglwysbach had only ever been a Cub Pack feeding into the Glan Conway troop. As we have seen the 1st Conwy is also presently feeding into this troop, which is apparently flourishing but which has not supplied any information for this history.

There was also a Group at Penmaenmawr from 1913 until the late 1990s, when a lack of leaders forced it to close. This was originally associated with the quarry, and was sponsored by the quarry owner, Colonel Derbyshire, who also donated a headquarters, built on quarry land and always known as the ‘Roy Hut’. For a time in the 1920s and 30s there was a flourishing Rover Crew within the Group, and photographs survive showing the troop at camp during the Welsh Jamboree at Haverfordwest in 1952.

From about 1920 to about 1950 there was also a troop at Dolgarrog in the Conwy Valley, who were District camping Champions in 1923 and 1924. However the main claim of this troop to fame was that the scoutmaster, J.A. Hunter, and one of the Rovers, C. Carpenter, were awarded the Silver Cross for gallantry as a result of their rescue work in connection with the bursting of the Dolgarrog Dam on the 2nd December 1925.

A more enduring (although not necessarily more worthy) memorial to those flourishing days of Scouting exists in the form of the District Scout Camp Site at Rowen in the Conwy Valley. This land was acquired in 1931, and developed for several years thereafter by a semi-official group known as the ‘Border Scouts’. These were Leaders, Commissioners and Rovers from both the counties and
several of the districts associated with the Conwy Valley, who formed apparently with the intention of acquiring a suitable site upon which to develop a Leader Training facility for North Wales. In this they were immediately successful, and Rowen was recognised as a Wood Badge training centre as early as 1932. The first course had actually been held there in September 1931, following an approving visit from the Chief Commissioner, Lord Swansea. The project clearly enjoyed support at the highest levels in Scouting. In April 1932 a Camp Chief (recognised leader Trainer) was appointed with a support team, and a year later the site was officially opened by J.S. Wilson, the Camp Chief of Gilwell Park. Rowen was used intensively for Leader Training until the Second World War, when the ‘Border Scouts’ also came to an end. After the war Leader Training was moved to a new site in Old Colwyn and the buildings at Rowen were dismantled. However the site continued in use, not only by Scouts but also by other youth groups, and between 1960 and 1980 new buildings were erected, including a toilet block. On the 30th July 2006 Rowen celebrated its 75th anniversary with a tree planting ceremony carried out by John Tucker (the son of Norman, the first camp Chief – of whom more anon) and Lord Roberts of Conwy, the President of the Appeal fund. At a time of many comings and goings in Scouting, it is pleasant to record that Rowen is as much used, and as much appreciated, now as it has ever been.

There were also training teams functioning, first in West Denbighshire, then in East Denbighshire, then for the whole of Denbighshire and finally (in 1974) for Clwyd. In about 1955 the West Denbighshire Team acquired its own site, known as Colwyn, and it was there that the training activities were transferred from Rowen.

The Welsh Scout Council also owns a property within the boundaries of Conwy Borough, and that is the camp site and house at Cornel on the banks of Lake Crafnant. This consists of 25 acres of camp site and a house converted to sleep up to 28. The sale of the former training site at Colwyn contributed to the purchase price, and although Cornel is not owned by Conwy, it is administered locally. When scouting for older boys was reorganised in 2003, the Saracen Venture Scout Unit from Colwyn Bay and the Crusader VSU from Telford in Shropshire combined to form an Explorer Scout Unit to act as a Service Team for what was now an Activity Centre. This started with about 16 members, and has already begun to feed into a Scout Network Team devoted to the same purpose. Like Rowen, the future of Cornel seems assured.

Just as the name of Frank Ralphs was synonymous with scouting in Conwy, so the name of Norman Tucker meant Scouting in Colwyn Bay. Norman joined the first troop there, which was established at the Y.M.C.A. in the spring of 1908, and was enrolled on his fourteenth birthday in May. The first issue of The Scout had just appeared, and Norman later recalled that notions of uniform at that time were flamboyant rather than disciplined! By 1910, when he would have been about 16, Norman had become an Assistant Scoutmaster – a reminder that age limits were less rigid in those days. He subsequently became the Scoutmaster, and in 1924 District Commissioner for the Colwyn Bay L.A., a position which he held until 1931, doubling up after 1927 as Assistant County Commissioner for West Denbighshire. In 1932, at the age of 38, he became Deputy Camp Chief for
North Wales, that being the term then applied to what would now be known as a Commissioner for Leader Training. Whether he continued as an ACC is not recorded, but it is known that he was active in organising the ‘Border Scouts’, who we have already noticed in connection with Rowen. It was he who established the newly acquired site as a Leader Training centre. He was awarded the Silver Wolf in 1932. Norman was a journalist by profession, reporting for many newspapers, and writing boys’ stories. For years he maintained a regular Scouting column over the penname of Grey Wolf. He wrote a history of scouting in North Wales, a study of North Wales and Chester during the Civil War, and histories of Colwyn Bay, Conwy and Llanrwst. After the war his services to Scouting were recognised with the title of Honorary Commissioner for Wales. Norman died in 1971, but his son John continues the family tradition, and is currently a member of the Conwy Fellowship. Between them they have given a full hundred years of service to the movement.

Until Norman’s appointment, it would seem that the 1st Colwyn Bay had no leaders who could remotely be classed as adults, and in 1909 they temporarily joined forces with the 1st Llandudno, which had a Scoutmaster in the person of A.E. Cooper, but the distances involved turned out to be too great. The 1st Llandudno were clearly a flourishing outfit at this point, because when Eric Walker came from Headquarters in London to give a lecture in Colwyn Bay in January 1911, they sent a bugle band to lead a parade of scouts through the town. Nevertheless the troop closed during the first World War, no doubt because of the shortage of leaders, and when boys were looking for scouting in the early 1920s, there was none to be found. This led to an interesting initiative, because the brother George and Frank Thomas decided to become lone Scouts, and when the going got rough, their older sister Dorothy joined in. Very soon a disorganised group of boys became the 2nd Llandudno Troop, with Dorothy Thomas as the Scoutmaster. Dorothy was a pioneer in every sense, becoming the first woman to qualify as a Leader, and in that capacity she attended the first meeting of the Welsh Scout Council in 1925. The 1st Llandudno subsequently reformed, and both the 1st and the 2nd still survive, although now they have combined to form the Orme Scout Group. They both owe a debt of gratitude to ‘Dot’ Thomas.

In 1965 an exotic element was added to Scouting the Colwyn area when Plast, a Scout and Guide organisation for Ukrainian exiles purchase a camp site at Rangemore. Plast presently has a membership of about 100, drawn from all over the United Kingdom, and still uses the site every summer. For the rest of the year it is leased to a local farmer. At its peak in the 1970s the camp catered for as many as 250, and although the numbers are now somewhat diminished, both the organisation and the camp are still operational – a forty year association which has only recently been identified.

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**Glamorgan West**

**General**

**Early Days (1907-1930)**

In 1907 Sir Robert Baden-Powell came to Swansea and delivered a lecture on 'Scouting for Boys'. A contemporary postcard picture dated November 1907 shows him with the Honourable and Mrs Vivien at Gelrafon. As a result of the interest stimulated by this lecture, several Troops were in existence before the end of 1908, although the earliest recorded warrants relate to the years following. Swansea was warranted in 1909; Neath, Port Talbot, Aberavon, Clydach and Ystalfera in 1910; Mumbles in 1911; Morriston, Seven Sisters, Crynant, Resolven and Reynoldston in 1912; and Cwmtwrch, Skewen, Loughor, Pontadawe, Briton Ferry and Trebanos in 1913. Counties and Districts were established, and the first Commissioners appointed in 1912. By 1914 there were seven Troops in Swansea District and twenty in West Glamorgan County, with a total number of 525 persons. Scouting flourished in West Glamorgan during the First World War. There was no shortage of leaders, and the Scouts were active in various patriotic causes – assisting the police, the hospital services and the local farmers.

In 1919 Captain F.S. Morgan was appointed District Commissioners for Swansea, thus inaugurating over fifty years of distinguished service. In the same year the Chief Scout (as he had then become) returned to Swansea and inspected a parade of 250 Scouts from Swansea and Carmarthen, when the first recorded good service awards were also presented. New troops were established steadily throughout the 1920s, and the Mumbles District was created in 1922. Also in 1922 a number of Scouts from Swansea also took part in a pilgrimage to Rome, and in 1923 the first of a number of major camps was hosted by the county at Margam Park.

The 1920 Jamboree at Olympia saw an active participation from Wales, with about 400 Scouts taking part. One of the star attractions was the 'colliery smash' display in the main arena by 37 boys from the 24th Swansea (Wesley) Troop, which involved erecting a 'pit head' and a 40 foot derrick crane, simulating an explosion, and staging the resulting rescue – including a stretcher case. The whole display lasted fourteen minutes, and was much admired. Various Welsh teams took part in tug-of-war, obstacle race, trek cart race and boxing competitions. One obstacle race team was drawn from West Glamorgan, and got to the final, and in the trek cart race a team from 3rd Swansea Valley did the same, losing eventually to the Danes. Cecil Mason of the 3rd Swansea Valley recorded six individual victories in the obstacle race, and R. Harry won the heavyweight boxing. The 8th Swansea, which put on a display of wood carving, also claimed to be the first Troop in Wales to have been involved in war service, having been employed in calling up reservists in August 1914.
The 1930s

In 1930 the Scouts (probably for the first time) distributed Christmas toys, and in the same year the first County Scouters’ Conference was held. By 1931 there were 32 Scout Groups registered in Swansea. [see Appendix 1] In 1931 also the first Wood Badge training course in South Wales was held at the Dyffryn Estate, Neath, run by a team consisting of Clifford Davies, Jack Mill and Frank Croft. These were Training Commissioners, known at that time as Deputy Camp Chiefs. In 1932 Sir Charles Venables Llewellyn gave the County permission 'to use for weekend camps a portion of his estate near the Home Farm, Penllergaer'. Two huts were erected on the site, and Clifford Davies and Jack Mill then ran a second Wood Badge course in the same year. By the end of 1932 the South West Wales Training Team had been formed to run similar courses for West Glamorgan, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Brecknock and Radnor on an annual basis. This team and its campsite continued to render yeoman service until the site was requisitioned for military purposes in 1942. 1932 also saw a County Rally to meet the Prince of Wales (Wales’s first – and only - Chief Scout). This was held at Singleton Park, by arrangement with the recently created University College. By this time a number of Groups were building their own headquarters, and several were opened in the early 1930s.

There were some memorable characters around in those days. Arthur Jones, supported by his wife and family, ran the 32nd Swansea (Rhyddings Park) Group for many years, and these were the flourishing days of Clifford Davies. He is remembered as ‘the first Scout in Swansea’, having joined as a small boy in 1908. Thereafter he was successively Patrol Leader, Assistant Scoutmaster, District Scoutmaster, Assistant District Commissioner and District Commissioner. He was also the first Town Commissioner for Swansea and the first Deputy Camp Chief – a position in which he was succeeded by Frank Thomas. During the six years in which he served as District Commissioner, the number of Scouts and Leaders increased from 350 to over 1200 – a remarkable achievement. Clifford Davies was awarded the Silver Wolf in 1932. These years also saw the beginnings of other notable Scout careers. Alf Masen served throughout the ‘30s and ‘40s. He was Quartermaster in 1935, and thereafter ran the Scout Shop for a number of years, latterly becoming an Assistant District Commissioner. Also on the scene was Frank (Daddy) Boon, notable for his boots and short trousers, at this time a Leader with the 25th Swansea (St.Georges) Group, although his career belongs mainly to the 1940s.

In 1936 an important (or at least well documented) County Rally and pageant was held on the 11th July at Cae-Coed Field, Pentwern Corner, Neath. Seven Local Associations (or Districts) took part; Swansea Valley, Neath, Swansea (still under the redoubtable Clifford Davies), Port Talbot, Mumbles, North Gower and Gower Peninsula. The events included bridge building (Mumbles Scouts), jungle games (Mumbles cubs), and ‘Physical fitness through the ages’. This last seems to have been a massive affair, with Cubs as ancient Greeks, Scouts as Red Indians and Ancient Britons, and some helpful hints from ‘Scouting Today’. The day culminated with a great effort from Swansea, in which the Cubs presented
the Mayor’s Procession, and the Scouts ‘men from Mars’. After that the tumbling,
tilting ‘uses of the Scout stave’ (Scouts) and ‘pyramids’ (Rovers) must have come
as something of a relief!

Numbers fluctuated a little at this time. In 1934 there were six Districts and sixty
six Groups, as against seven Districts two years later. The total number of
Scouts in West Glamorgan in 1934 was 2,577 (260 Group leaders and officers,
925 Wolf Cubs, 1095 Scouts, 150 Rovers, 128 District and County officers and
19 Commissioners). This was down from 2,739 in the previous year, which took
the officers by surprise as the number of Groups was still increasing. It was
noted that 52 Scouts held the First Class award.

The 1940s

Few records survive from the days of the Second World War, relating to the
County as a whole, although there are suggestions from the Groups and Districts
that the movement was adversely affected by a shortage of leaders. There was a
Rover Crew at R.A.F. St Athan which provided a lot of help with training, but the
active role which Scouts had played in Civil Defence in the First World War was
not repeated. They ‘helped out’ with things like fundraising and paper collection,
but there was less call for amateur involvement in such activities as fire
watching, rescue and ambulance work.

After the war, in 1946, the old training campsite had to be vacated. It had been
held only on an understanding, not on a lease, and the land was required for
building development. Partly as a consequence, in 1948 a twenty one year lease
on the Silver Cross site was purchased by the Welsh Scout Council. It was
refurbished by local Scouters and Rovers, and was to be run by the South Wales
Training Team until 1971. The 1949 census (the first after the war) showed 64
Groups in the County, with a total membership of 2,745. This was the first year of
Senior Scouting, but there were only 185 Senior Scouts – as against 222
Leaders and 153 Local Association Officers!

The only ‘character’ noted from the period is a Mr. Albert Short, Scoutmaster of
the 8th Swansea (Mount Zion) troop, who was apparently famous for wearing
Sam Brown belt with his shorts!

The 1950s

Again the records are to be found mostly at a more local level, but this was a
period of confidence in spite of the problems posed for many leaders by the
demands of National Service The census figures show a modest expansion from
2544 in 1950 to 2800 in 1955, but there was a dramatic decline in the number of
Local Association Officers, from 134 in 1950 to 5 in 1953 which must be
explained by changes in the methods of counting. No LA complained of being
suddenly bereft of secretaries or treasurers!

In 1956 a Rover/Ranger Conference was held at Brangwyn Hall, Swansea,
attended by Lady Baden Powell, the World Chief Guide, which heralded a period
of improved collaboration between the two movements, and in 1958 a large
conference of Patrol Leaders and Senior Scouts, aimed at easing the transition from Troop to Senior Troop, which was causing problems in some places. In 1954, when there had been 876 Scouts under 15 in the County, there were only 59 over 15, and the main ‘leakage point’ was at what should have been the transition.

In 1959 a unique, and short lived, experiment was tried with the County organisation, when Swansea was elevated to the status of sub-county, containing five districts. This did not lead to the expected improvements in communication, and was discontinued in 1971.

**The 1960s**

By this time conferences had become a regular feature of scouting in the County, Section Leaders, Patrol Leaders and Local Association officers all meeting from time to time. This proved a more satisfactory method of improving communications than administrative re-organisation.

The Swansea sub-county Annual Report for 1964-5 shows that in the latter year there were no fewer than 42 Groups in the sub-county, divided between the 5 Districts, North District being the largest with 11. There were also 2 District Rover Crews. In that year also no fewer than 18 Queen's Scout awards were earned, the 11th Swansea clocking up 4, and several other groups 2 each.[for details, see Appendix]

The decade also saw the building of the Scout and Guide Headquarters at Bryn Road. Sir Charles Maclean, the Chief Scout, cut the first turf in 1966, and Lady Olave Baden Powell opened the completed building on the 18th July 1968. In June 1969 there was a massive rally at the Pontardulais Showground, when 1200 West Glamorgan Cubs and Scouts welcomed the Chief Scout, the Chief Commissioner for Wales (Christopher Cory), the Commissioner for South Wales (Gerald Bellingham), and their own County Commissioner (John Aeron Thomas). The events included the building of a large catapult by the Pennard Scouts, a demonstration of knotting by Pontardulais, and (apparently) a Hot Dog Snack by Llwcwr! Scout David Thomas received the Chief Scouts Award from the Chief himself, and Mr. Aeron Thomas the Silver Wolf

**The 1970s**

This decade is chiefly remembered for the Swansea Gang Shows at the Grand Theatre. These were combined Scout and Guide productions. Rehearsals were conducted by John Childers, Hywel Weaver and Margaret Grey, and all the costumes were made by the parents. The youngsters were brilliant; the audiences loved them, and the shows provided colourful highlights for the many Cubs, Brownies, Scouts and Guides who took part.

The Chief Scout was a regular visitor to West Glamorgan rallies during this period, and in 1978 the Queen came to one such at Margam Park. In the same year a new Group headquarters was opened at Mansel Road, Gowerton, by Christopher Cory and Mrs Kwantes, the Chief Commissioners for Scouts and
Guides respectively. In 1972 the County President – the veteran Col. F. S. Morgan – initiated a new challenge competition which was an immediate success, and 1977 was ‘a year of public service’. This involved a Scout report which gained ministerial recognition and praise in London, and (more locally) a very thorough litter sweep on Swansea beach. More prosaically, piped water was installed at Silver Cross in 1971.

It was also at this time that Mrs Betty Sivertsen was Mayoress of Swansea (1976). Mrs Sivertsen had been an Assistant Cub Scout leader with the 5th Mumbles, and later CSL and Assistant County Commissioner (Cub Scouts). As Mayoress she organised many events to which Cubs and Scouts were invited, and received the Silver Acorn in the year of her mayoralty.

**Since 1980**

Over the last twenty five years the number of Scouts in West Glamorgan has fluctuated, but the general trend has been downwards. In 1985 there were 75 Groups, in 2006, 39. Beaver Scouts numbered 126 in 1985 (when they were a new section), and after peaking at 689 ten years later, have now dropped back to 338. Cub Scouts and Scouts have both more than halved, the former from 1373 to 519, and the latter from 801 to 299. Venture and Explorer Scout numbers have fluctuated even more than the others, peaking in 1989 at 156, and collapsing to 40 ten years later. Here there has been a partial recovery, and the 2006 number was 67. Similar fluctuations have occurred in the past, and the main problem now, as always, is the recruitment and retention of Leaders. In spite of what is sometimes said, young people’s attitudes do not change dramatically, but whereas in 1985 there were 388 Leaders, in 2006 there were 250 – and that represented a recovery from the low point of 2003, when there were just 203.

This problem has led to a certain amount of rationalisation. The fewer groups are also somewhat larger, reducing the need for Leaders (although not by much!) Also, as late as 2000 there were 7 Districts in the County, but as a result of various mergers, there are now only 4. Swansea Central and Swansea North amalgamated to form Swansea District, while Port Talbot and Neath came together to form Afan Nedd District. The 2006 census showed 7 active groups in Swansea District, 10 in Swansea Gower, 11 in Cwm Newydd and 14 in Afan Nedd.

This time has also seen the recognition of some long and exceptional service. Charles Harding started as a scout with the 8th Swansea (Zion/Alexander) in 1936, becoming Troop Leader and King’s Scout. Thereafter he became District Cub Scout Leader, District Scout Leader, Assistant Rover Scout Leader. More recently he was CSL of the 3rd Swansea (Rhyddings Park) and Assistant County Commissioner (Cub Scouts). Since 1968 he has been warden of the Bryn Road Headquarters, and he received the Silver Wolf in 1989.

Bill (Ian) Greatrix began his Scouting as a Rover with the 44th Swansea (St Pauls Sketty) in 1957, becoming ARSL in 1964. After the Rover Section was abolished in 1967 he became Group Scout Leader in 1972, and two years later transferred as Scout Leader to the 47th Swansea (Killay) Group. Since 1977 he
has been Assistant County (Area) Commissioner for Scouts, and received a bar to his Silver Acorn in 2004. Among his other achievements have been the successful introduction of Scout car racing and rifle shooting. The 47th Swansea have been National Scout Shooting Champions on many occasions.

Ann Gratrix began as a Ranger Guide helper with the 32nd Swansea in 1961, becoming Assistant Cub Scout Leader with the same group in 1974, and ADC (Cubs) for Swansea Central District later in the same year. She was later Assistant County Commissioner, a position which she held until 2000, when she became District Commissioner of the new Cwm Newydd District. She has been a Leader Trainer since 1992, and received the Silver Wolf in 2004.

Dr. Elwyn Davies, similarly a long term servant of Scouting in West Glamorgan, also received a well merited Silver Wolf in 2004 at the hands of the Deputy Chief Commissioner for Wales, Alan Clewett. The presentation was made at the 5th Mumbles headquarters. For many years Elwyn was Assistant Group Scout Leader with the 5th Mumbles, and his lengthy Scouting career included being Secretary of Glamorgan West County/Area Scout Council between 1971 and 2003, and Registrar of the County/Area Training Team from 1981 to 2003. He retired in 2003, following a serious spinal operation and is presently a Skills Instructor (and your chronicler).

DISTRICTS

Mumbles

The Mumbles was a Scout District from 1922 to 1967, when it was redesignated as Swansea Gower. The Groups there retain the original name, and there are presently three; the 1st (Oystermouth), 5th (Newton) and the 6th (West Cross). There have also at different times been a 2nd, 3rd (Oystermouth), 4th, and 7th, all now closed. Past District Commissioners (all with strong local backgrounds) have included Harry Gratrix, Jeff Evans, Don Frame, Allan Clewett (later County Commissioner and awarded the Silver Wolf in 1994)) and Keith Davies (presently District Chairman). The present incumbent is Allen Aldred.

The 1st Mumbles was registered as an Open troop in May 1919, but not very much is known about it until the 1930s, when camps are recorded at Hele, near Ilfracome (1934), Saundersfoot (1936) and Manordeilo (1939). The 1st combined with the 3rd Mumbles to send a contingent of six (whose names are recorded) to the 1937 World Jamboree in Holland. The Troop seems to have struggled during the Second World war, probably due to a shortage of leaders, although First Class hike logbooks survive for Patrol Leaders Hinder and Long (1941) and Alec Yeldman (1943). A joint camp was held with the 3rd and the 6th Mumbles at Glanrhyd, Manordeilo in 1943, which Harold Smith (later County Commissioner) attended as a Patrol Leader. It is also known that the Troop ‘helped with the war effort’ but not known in what way. The difficulties continued after the war, largely because of the demands of National Service, but the 1950 and 60s saw a strong recovery. The troop grew in numbers from 15 in 1952 to 30 in 1964. The strength of the Senior Scout Troop (founded in 1949) fluctuated, and it was from time to time meeting jointly with the 6th Mumbles. Nevertheless the commitment of those
who stayed on as seniors was strong, and many went on to become leaders. Alan Clewett was one such; being leader from the early 1960s until 1978, when he became District Commissioner. Assistant Scout leaders at this time included Robert Thomas and Peter Shapton – the latter known for his expertise in water activities. In the early 1970s the troop was the proud possessor of six canoes, but these had to be ‘mothballed’ in 1979 because Peter Shapton had departed and none of the current Leaders possessed a ‘Boat Certificate’ authorising him to supervise their use.

In 1973 the Troop camped abroad with the 5th Sketty Guides – this bold experiment being due to the fact that the Guider of the 5th was the wife of the current Scout Leader. The late 1970s were difficult. The old Scout hut was demolished in 1975, and the Troop moved into temporary accommodation at the Old People’s Welfare Home behind the British Legion in Mumbles. After returning to a rebuilt Headquarters it was so short of money that it had to ‘make do’ for several years with old equipment. The departure of Alan Clewett and Peter Shapton left the Troop in such low water that it was forced to close briefly in 1979. However, by the end of that year John Price (of a distinguished Scouting family) had moved from Waunarlwydd to take over the Troop, and ably assisted by Johnny Robertson, and later by Andrew Lloyd, swiftly restored its fortunes. Two Chief Scout’s Awards were achieved in 1979, and seven in 1981. At the end of 1983 business commitments forced John Price to give up, but his former assistant Andrew Lloyd was able to take over, and assisted by Johnny Robertson, and later Andrew Falvey continued the tradition which John Price had established. In 1990 the Group took over the exclusive management of Sutton Hall (the Group Headquarters) which had previously been shared with the Guides. The Hall was refurbished in 2004, thanks to a grant from Barclays Bank. Twenty Chief Scouts Awards have been gained since 1986, and several of the present Leaders hold long service awards. The movement of Leaders since 1980, and present team, are listed in the appendix.

The 2nd Mumbles appears to have come into existence in 1924, following the establishment of the Mumbles Local Association (District) in May 1922. At first the 2nd met along with the 1st in the Scout Hut at the Grove, but little is known about it beyond the fact that the Leader and Assistant Leader were Ernest and Trevor Jones. A First Class Hike report by Patrol Leader R. Withell dated 13th-16th September 1924 is just about the only record of its activities. By the end of that year the Troop seems to have merged with the 1st, retaining only its distinctive green scarf. However the Cub Pack continued, and the Troop seems to have reformed in 1926. In 1928 it was listed in the census return as the 2nd Mumbles (Baptist Church) Troop. The Leaders at that time were Trevor James and F. Wilcox, with the Cub Leaders given as Eleanor James and Muriel Hodgetts. The meeting place was the Baptist Church Lecture hall in Langland Road. The Troop was still in existence in 1933, when it was listed in a conference programme, but had finally expired by 1940.

The 3rd Mumbles was sponsored by All Saints Church, Oystermouth, and was registered as a Cub Pack in November 1925. It appears to have been an offshoot of the Sunday School, and the meeting place was given as ‘the Scout Shed’. A troop was registered two years later under the leadership of Major H. Leslie
Hyett and Herbert Chown. At that time there were 18 scouts, but by the census of 1928 there were 34 Scouts and 22 Wolf Cubs. Don Bates, who was a Scout in the troop at the time, recalls that it met for a time at the new church hall, and later moved to the Grove. Don was Troop Leader, and later Scoutmaster when Major Hyett became GSM in 1932. He continued in that role until he left the District in 1937. Bill Barrington, another Scout at that time, remembers receiving his First Class award in 1935 (on his 14th birthday), and the King’s Scout Award a year later. When Don Bates left the Troop became Sea Scouts and adopted a maroon neckerchief. A combined 1st and 3rd Mumbles contingent (of which Bill Barrington was a member) attended the World Jamboree in 1937. The names of most of the Leaders from this period are known, and at least two of the Lady Cubmasters married Scoutmasters, which seems to have been a common feature of the time! Mr. Barrington took over the Pack from Mrs Bates in 1939. The 3rd Mumbles survived the war, and changed from a sponsored to an open group in 1956, when Harold Smith was Scoutmaster. However, when Harold moved on in 1958 no one could be found to take over from him, and the Troop closed. The Pack continued for a few more years, but also closed in the early 1960s, bringing to an end the story of what had once been a strong and flourishing Group.

The 4th Mumbles was registered in September 1928 as an open Wolf Cub Pack, with no Scout Troop. Apart from the fact that the Pack met at the Mission Church, Castle Road, Norton, there is little record of this Pack, although it seems to have continued until the end of the Second World War. During the war, no doubt because of restrictions on evening meetings, all the Mumbles packs met together on Saturday afternoons. After the war a new 4th Mumbles Group was formed (but never apparently registered) sponsored by the Methodist Church and meeting at the Victoria Hall. There was both a Troop and a Pack, and both flourished in the 1950s, when the names of most of the leaders are known. The troop won the Pressdee Camping Trophy in 1959, and was famous for its Gang Shows at the Victoria Hall. The Group closed in the 1960s.

The 5th Mumbles was a direct product of the war. It was started as a Cub Pack by Monica Hinds and Betty Silvertsen, on the 29th April 1942 at the request of the vicar, and met at St Peters Church Newton, because wartime restrictions made it difficult for boys from Newton to join any of the packs in the Mumbles proper. At that time there were five Sixes, and they squeezed into the old School House at the top of Nottage Road. After the war the Pack started to meet in St Peters Church hall, and used the field at the back (now the site of the vicarage) for open air activities. There was a constant turn over of leaders, but it continued to flourish. A Scout Troop was established in 1945, and although the names of the Leaders are known, almost the only evidence for its existence seems to be a photograph taken in 1947 in the grounds of Newton School. It lasted for only a few years. The Cub Pack throughout the 1950s and 1960s fed mainly into the 1st Mumbles Troop, until the 5th Mumbles Troop was reformed in 1968. A number of well known characters went from the 5th Pack to the 1st Troop at this time, including Roger Blythe and Alan Clewett. The reformed Troop was largely a spin off from the 1st. The names of most of the Leaders and Assistants since 1968 are known, including many who are still active in scouting – Bruce Bowbanks (ADC Scouts) and Kevin Williams (now GSL) in particular. Kevin was awarded
the Medal of Merit in 2004. Mrs Joan Bowbanks was the first Lady Troop Scouter in the District. In the early 1970s a second Pack was formed, but this was forced to close in 1982 owing to a shortage of leaders. The 1970s were a flourishing period for the Group. In that year it was able to lease a piece of ground from Welsh Water and build its own Headquarters, which was opened in great style on the 12th June 1975 by Mrs Betty Sivertsen who at the time was both Assistant County Commissioner (Cubs) and Deputy Mayoress of Swansea. The event was also attended by Colonel J. Vaughn Williams, Her Majesty’s Lord Lieutenant of West Glamorgan. In 1979 Mrs Barbara Davies became GSL, and continued in post until January 2004. She was awarded a bar to the Silver Acorn in 2005, and is now Group Chairman. The Group had Cub and Scout flags dedicated in 1978, followed by a Welsh Dragon and a Beaver pennant in July 1996. A sad distinction was achieved in September 1980 when young scout, Francis Kettley, was awarded the Meritorious Conduct Medal for his bravery during a terminal illness. Francis died not long after.

The 5th has been a scouting success story. In the 1990s the Group participated enthusiastically in the Scout Christmas Post, and was able to use the proceeds to carry out a major revamp of its headquarters – where Cubs, Scouts, Guides and Brownies now all meet. Beavers started in 1987, and new Leaders have been regularly available. The Group Executive Committee has been a model of support, and the Secretary and Treasurer both received Long Service decorations (20 years) in 2005. Dr. Elwyn Davies was Assistant Group Scout Leader, and after long association with the group is now a Skills Instructor (Scouts). The sixtieth anniversary of the formation of the Group was celebrated in May 2002, when survivors of all the stages of the Group’s development were able to gather – and celebrate! There were further celebrations at the AGM on 11th May 2006, when the Lord Lieutenant of West Glamorgan, Commodore Robert Hastie, presented Robert Hixon with his Queen’s Scout award. This was the first in the Group’s history, and went appropriately to one who had been Beaver, Cub and Scout in the same group, and is now an Assistant Leader. To gild his lily, Robert also gained the Gold Award of the Duke of Edinburgh’s Scheme.

The 6th Mumbles was originally formed as the 1st Blackpill in 1912, and was one of the founder groups in the Swansea Local Association, formed in that year. Very little is known, or remembered, about it before the Second World War, from which it may be deduced that it was neither large nor flourishing. At some point during the war it changed its designation to 6th Mumbles, and the choice (or allocation) of that number suggests that this happened between the registration of the 5th in April 1942 and the appearance of the 6th in a joint camp at Glanrhyd Manordeilo in 1943. The only record of activity before that date is a First Class hike log by Graham Govier dated 3rd August 1941. The Troop and Pack originally met at the old Vivian Hall in Blackpill, until moving in 1961 to West Cross, where it has remained and flourished ever since. Before 1961 the 6th was sponsored by Clyne Church, and the priests in charge took an active role in the running of the Group, but with the move in that year it severed its connection with the church and became an Open Group. There have been a number of well known figures among the 6th leadership – Graham Govier (SM for several years after the war), Harold Smith (later County Commissioner), Jack Brennan (who
carried out the move) and Stuart Price. The new hall at West Cross was also
dedicated to two former members who lost their lives during the war, Geoff
Burgess and Harry Diggory.

Between 1963 and 1967 there was a close association between the 6th and the
1st Mumbles and a number of joint camps took place, at Newcastle Emlyn,
Marsden (near Hereford), and (in 1967) on a site which is now flooded by the
Llynne Brianne dam. A number of ‘characters’ remain in mind from that period –
Ted ‘Wedge’ Grinter, (who dug the deepest ‘bog’ pits) his son David, ‘Col’ Collis,
Barry ‘Bargie’ Jenkins, and Jimmy Porter. The original Blackpill Cub Pack had
been a casualty of the war, and was restarted (as 6th Mumbles) at Vivian Hall in
1945. The names of all the early leaders are known – and again a number of
them married within the movement. One, Mrs Val Williams, was Harry Diggory’s
sister and was closely associated with the new Burgess Diggory Hall. By July
1987 there were two Cub Packs (known as the Ospreys and the Herons), and
they held a joint camp with the Scouts at Clyne Farm. This was the Cub’s first
time under canvas, and was judged a huge success. The following year both
 Packs visited Windsor Safari Park; but unfortunately owing to a shortage of
leaders were forced to merge in the same year. This has in no way curbed their
spirit of adventure. In 1991 they attended the Anniversary Cuboree in Margam
Park, and the County Cub Scout Camp in 1993. The first Father and Son camp
(an idea borrowed from the Scouts) was held in 1992 and was greatly enjoyed
(especially by the fathers). The Scout Leaders came along and ran the camp fire,
and the whole event was such a success that it has been repeated every year
since.

The list of their activities is endless. A fund raising BBQ every year in Parc-le-
Breos – in 1996 a visit to Legoland – in 1998 a promotional Tea Party with the
Guides and Brownies at West Cross – and in 2004 the three Mumbles Packs got
together to run a special Christmas post. It is hoped that this venture will
continue. The 6th have attended every Welsh Cub Fun Day at Builth Wells –
even in the rain. Mrs Val Dilley, ACSL until 1984, CSL 1984-94, and GSL 1994-
2003, was awarded the Silver Acorn in 2004.

The 7th Mumbles is no more than a shadow. It existed for a few years in the late
1950s and early 1960s, meeting the Scout Shed at the Grove. Its members were
drawn from the Nazareth House Orphanage on Clyne Common, and it was
unusual in that it was a Troop without a Cub Pack. Little is remembered about it
beyond the name of the Troop Leader – a gentle soul called Peter. It was the
brainchild of a Mr. Murphy, and when he had to give up the leadership, it
disappeared, leaving very little behind.

There was also a flourishing Mumbles Rover Crew in the 1920s and 1930s. This
was an organisation for the over 18s (sometimes a long way over), and was
dedicated to public service. The idea was based upon Baden Powell’s highly
romanticised view of medieval chivalry, and had a strong appeal at that time.
Rover Crews struggled during and after the war, and were discontinued following
Over forty countries were represented at the World Rover Moot at Kanderstag in 1931. The Welsh contingent numbered 30, of whom 8 came from the Mumbles Crew, including several well known later as Leaders in local scouting.

**Neath**

Scouting came early to Neath, when the first Troop was formed at Easter 1909. Among those early Scouts were many who later performed sterling service for the movement, notably John S. Mills (District Commissioner 1935-41), and E. Johns (District Rover Scout Leader). Not very much is known about those early days, but by 1927 there were (or had been) six groups in the district. On the 23rd June in that year a Grand Fete and Bazaar was staged by the Local Association, and in that took part representatives of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd (Church) and 5th Neath, and the 1st Briton Ferry groups. There must at some point have been a 4th Neath, but it had presumably ceased to exist by that time. It was, apparently, a ‘grand day’. The first and second parts consisted of displays by the Cubs, including an investiture, singing, skipping, exercise, the Grand Howl and (more imaginatively) the landing of Captain Cook in New Zealand. The third part comprised Scout displays – a patrol camp, physical training, and something mysteriously called ‘The Diamond Thief’. The day concluded with a camp fire and community singing. Theodore Gibbins and C.D. Godfrey – respectively LA President and District Commissioner – presided.

In the late 1950s a District Headquarters was built at Cadoxton, after a big fund raising effort, and was opened in December 1960 by Sir Cenydd Traherne, the Lord Lieutenant of Glamorgan. It was extended in 1966 to include the camping and training ground, and has since been extensively used, not only by local Scouts but also by those from other parts of the UK – and beyond. By 1995 it was clear that the old Store and Toilet hut was inadequate, and an application to the National Lottery Charities Board produced a grant of £59,521 under its ‘Youth Issues’ programme. This enabled a splendid new amenities block to be built, which was opened on the 17th May 1997 by Councillor D.M. John (Mayor of Neath and Port Talbot).

With the advent of Venture Scouting in the late 1970s a District Unit was formed under the name of ‘Minus Four’, and in September 1979 Paul Fetherstone (the present District Commissioner) became the first member to gain the Queen’s Scout Award. At the same time, in February 1979 and April 1980 two very successful Scout and Guide Gang Shows were staged at the Gwyn Hall in Neath – of which many happy memories still survive!

Many outstanding personalities have served scouting in Neath. As we have seen John Stuart Mill was one of the very first scouts. He was subsequently ASM (1910-12), SM (1912-47), ADC, DC (1935-41), GSL and ACC. He was awarded the Silver Wolf in 1957 and appointed MBE in 1960. Sydney Cooper became ASM of the 9th Neath (Skewen) in 1931, and subsequently SM, DSM, GSM, ADC and County International Adviser. Since 1977 he has been County Adviser for Special Needs. He was awarded the Silver Wolf in 1974 and the Chief Scouts Fifty Year Long Service decoration in 1981. He was appointed MBE in 1976. John Leitz was invested as a Scout in the 1st Neath in 1936, becoming Patrol
Leader and Troop Leader. Subsequently he was ASM (1941-47), SM (1947-54), SSM, DSM, ADC, DC (1955-63) and ACC (1964-71). He gained his Scout Wood Badge in 1951 and the Rover variety in 1955. He was awarded a bar to his Silver Acorn in 1984. Ron Boulden began his Scouting with the 1st Conway, far away in the North, before moving to the 3rd Neath where he became SL. Later he was SL of the 14th Neath (Cimla), ADC and ACC. As County Secretary he was responsible for introducing the successful Christmas Card Post. He was awarded the Silver Wolf in 1996. Ann Harries started her scouting as a member of the Executive Committee of the 12th Neath (Resolven) in 1969. She became ACSL of the 5th (Bryncoch) in 1972, and CSL of the 9th in 1974. Subsequently she was DCSL for Neath and ACC (Cubs) for West Glamorgan before becoming DC from 1989 to 1997. She was then Area Commissioner from 1997 until her retirement in 2005. She was awarded the Silver Wolf in 2002.

[In 2001 the Neath and Port Talbot Districts merged to become Afan Nedd District]

**Port Talbot**

Scouting goes back to the very beginning in Port Talbot. Two Troops are reputed to have been established before the end of 1908 by Fred James and W. Vincent, although Mr. Vincent was not warranted until 1911 and Fred James died in 1912 without, apparently, receiving a warrant at all. Fred won a competition in *The Scout* magazine in 1909 to go on a promotional visit to Germany which was led by Archibald Kyle, the Managing Secretary of the Boy Scouts, a trip for which his scrap book still survives. Mr. Vincent’s troop became the 1st Aberavon (St.Mary’s). It was formed for the boys from the Mansel Works, and met at first at his home in St.Mary’s Place, before moving to the National School. This Troop attended the first Jamboree at Windsor Park in July 1911. Mr. Vincent stood down in 1916 and the leadership was taken over by W. Wilkin. The Troop suffered several casualties during the First World War, but by the time that Mr. Wilkin took it over it had acquired a Patron in the person of Capt.A.M. Talbot-Fletcher of Margam Park fame. Fred James’s troop became the 1sr Port Talbot (Mayor’s Own), but he seems to have given up the active leadership very early, probably on the ground of his deteriorating health. It is thought that his successor, W.G. Cosgrove, went with Baden Powell to Argentina in 1909, but whether this was before or after receiving his warrant is not clear. He took the Troop to the New Forest Camp and to the Ystradgynlais Rally in 1910. A third Troop was started at St Peters in 1911, and counted a war hero among its members. This was Rupert Price Hallows, who was probably its first Scoutmaster and who won both the MC and the VC, the latter posthumously, in 1915. Two stained glass windows were subsequently dedicated to his memory, one of which is now in the new Neath Port Talbot Hospital and the other in St Peters Church. The St Peters Troop merged with the 1st Port Talbot in 1916.

The Port Talbot and District Scout Association had originally been formed in 1909, but it was not officially registered until April 1916, at which time W. Miles was the Chairman, and there were five groups in the District.
The 1st Port Talbot attended the London Jamboree of 1920, where they distinguished themselves by coming second in an obstacle race against international competition. They also won the Llewellyn Cup every year from 1920 to 1926. In August 1924 some members attended the Imperial Jamboree at Wembley and were presented to the Prince of Wales. Sea Scouts from the 1st were also the only Welsh Scouts to get to sleep on board H.M.S. Northampton in the Thames. At about this time also one of the Troop’s Kings Scouts, Cecil Smith, was the first Scout in Wales to receive the Cornwall Badge. Another first was achieved soon after, when the troop was the first to conduct an investiture in Welsh. The Crowned bard presented the badges in honour of the occasion. In 1927 the SM (Wyndham Wilkin) attended a special commemorative camp on Brownsea Island, and in 1928 Alun Williams (an ASM) was awarded the Silver Cross for rescuing a man from Port Talbot docks. In 1930 the old headquarters at the top of Conduit Street had to be abandoned on account of bridge works, and was relocated at the old YMCA opposite the railway Station. In July 1929 a contingent attended the ‘coming of age’ Jamboree at Arrow Park, Birkenhead, and also an all-Wales camp at Margam Park.

The origins of the 2nd Port Talbot (Holy Trinity) are obscure, but in 1932 it is known that the leaders were W. Bennett, Reg Greenfield and Mervin Price. At that date there was also another troop at Abercregan, but nothing is known of it apart from the name of the leader – a certain Wally Thomas. It appears that this Troop later merged with the 3rd, having camped with them at Margam and Home Farm.

The 3rd (Sandfields) was started at an unknown date by a Mr. T.G. Phillips, using a large shed at the rear of his house (13 Rhanallt Street) as a meeting place. By 1935 he had handed over the leadership to Wilf Inskip, continuing himself as ASM. All the boys were drawn from the Margam area. In 1937/8 a new headquarters was built on land behind Landore Avenue which had been specially cleared by the Scouts. In 1937 both the Scouters were awarded the bronze medal of the association for rescuing youths from drowning – surely a unique double. The medals were presented by Lord Trethowen in the St Theodore’s Mission Hall on the 2nd August. The Ellis Brigham VSU was subsequently part of this group.

There have also been the 4th (Wesley), 5th (S. Theodore’s), 6th (Bryn), 7th (Cwmavon), 8th (St Catherine’s Bagman), 9th (Groeswen) and 10th (St. Mary’s), but very little is known about them in spite of the fact that the 5th is still in existence.

The 11th (St Pauls) was probably started in the 1920s, but appears for the first time in 1930 when Frank Gosney was the SM. They met in St Dyfrig’s Hall in Marsh Street. In 1938 the troop was given a 27 foot Montague Whaler, which they kept on the River Afan. As a result the troop became Sea Scouts! The whaler was lost to enemy action in 1940, but the conversion remained. The Troop busied itself during the war, acting as messengers for the Fire Service, the ARP and the police, but at the end of the war they lost the use of St Dyfrig’s Hall, moving temporarily to the District Headquarters in Oakwood Street. In 1949 they were renumbered at the 1st Port Talbot Sea Scouts, and John Gosney took over
as SM. In 1951 a site was obtained on Llewellyn’s Quay, and the old District headquarters was dismantled and moved lock stock and barrel, becoming the new headquarters for the recently designated Port Talbot Sea Scouts. There was then a urgent need to get back on the water, and Mr. F.W. Cartwright, the Chief Executive of the Steel Company of Wales agreed to provide a sailing boat in kit form, if the Scouts would buy another – and assemble them both! This was done; other boats were also made and (thanks to the good offices of Alan Hooker), permission was obtained to use the Works Reservoir, where the boats were kept in shed. In 1955 permission was obtained to use the Dock water at Llewellyn’s Quay only at a small annual rent and a substantial (£50,000) insurance indemnity. At the same time a steel lifeboat was given to the Troop, and in 1958 Owen Powell took over as Scout Leader. In 1960 a disastrous fire destroyed both headquarters and the boats, and although the rebuilding of the headquarters on the same site was immediately undertaken, the Troop never really recovered. In 1964 Peter Evans and B.Norton became SL and GSL respectively, but by 1969 falling numbers forced the Group to close. Fortunately the lapse was only temporary, as the Group was subsequently reformed, and still exists.

The District Executive Committee achieved the remarkable feat of working unchanged throughout the war, and the Scout Leaders achieved none of the heroics of their earlier counterparts. There were about eleven Groups in the District at that time, and the names of many of the leaders are known. By 1949 the DEC had changed its wartime composition, and at that time was meeting in the Port Talbot Steel Company’s General Offices, near the railway station.

Senior Scouts came into existence in 1949, and by 1950 the Sea Scout Troop had a senior Patrol, while the Cwmavon Group ran to a whole separate Troop. At the same time a new Troop was briefly established at St Josephs, but it has left little trace in the records. Individual Troops regularly attended the Welsh Jamborees in 1953, 1957 and 1961, and this was a flourishing time for the local training team as large numbers of leaders completed courses under the watchful eyes of Gerald Bellingham (County Commissioner) and John Leitz (Trainer). In 1956 the District LA was re-registered at Headquarters, and at that time the Groups recorded were the 1st Sea Scouts, the 2nd, the 3rd (Sandfields), the 5th (St Theodore’s), the 6th (Abercregan), the 7th (Cwmavon), the 8th (Baglan), the 9th (Groeswen), the 10th (St.Mary’s) and the 11th (St Pauls). The old 1st, having given up the designation of ‘Mayor’s own’ in response to complaints, had by this time gone out of existence, and several others had changed their designations. In 1956 also the ADC Cubs (Mrs. Lavery) received the Silver Acorn and on the same occasion Philip Jones of the 8th was presented with his Queen’s Scout Badge. More unusually William Mizzen and John Angel of the 7th were awarded certificates of merit for having rescued a sheep which had fallen into a well at Cwmavon. 1957 saw two further Queen’s Scout awards (to Geoffrey Gravelle and John Iles), and the following year the whole management of the District was restructured with the appointment of several new ADCs. The proceeds of the Gang Show in that year (£50) were donated to the St Theodore’s church building fund to assist with the building of a new church (Holy Trinity) on the Sandfields Estate. There were four Queen’s Scout awards (Anthony Pryce-Jones, Robert Galliver, Roger Bennett and Edward Lewis – all of the 10th), and an extension to the 3rd’s group headquarters was opened.
In 2001 Neath and Port Talbot Districts were merged to form Afan Nedd District, and three of the old port Talbot groups are still running.

**Swansea**

Information here is very incomplete. There are, or have been, over thirty groups in Swansea at different times, but the available evidence relates to only four of them – the 20th, 24th, 31st and 32nd.

The 20th is the oldest currently active Group in West Glamorgan. It was founded in 1915 by Frank Powell, and met originally in the Libanus School Room in Morriston. After the Second World War a new headquarters was established in Bath Road, when Griff James became first Cub Scout Leader and then Scout Leader. He subsequently took over as Group Scout Leader, and when he retired on reaching the age of sixty five, Hywel Weaver took over that position – which he still retains. In 1961 the Group was able to open a new headquarters in Solva Road, Clase. The group presently has three Sections, and returned 31 members and 5 leaders at the 2006 census.

The 24th (Wesley) was established in 1918 on the joint initiative of the Wesley Chapel and the Fresh Air Fund. A meeting was held at Caswell Bay in May of that year, when a certain T.J. Hurn of the Chapel announced ‘We must have a Scout Troop’. Shortly after the Chapel Sunday School Committee appointed a Chairman and a Scout Master, and the 24th was in being.

The Troop was obviously established on a grand scale. There were eight Patrols, including a rather curious looking Senior Patrol, which may have been a disguised Rover Crew since it seems to have been led by the Rover Mate, David Thomas. There were also specialist instructors in music, seamanship, carpentry, photography, signalling and swimming – a range of activities which few can have equalled. A contingent from the troop attended the World Jamboree at Olympia in August 1920, and represented Wales in a ‘World Championship of Technical Scouting’, against entries from 25 other countries. ‘Boss’ Goldsworthy (the SM), who was an engineer by profession, devised a simulated colliery explosion, complete with pithead apparatus, a matter in which he had considerable experience. Roused by their ‘alarm bugle’, the Scouts from the nearby campsite rushed to the rescue. A 36 foot derrick was erected, artificial smoke billowed, and the intrepid scouts got the miners out one by one. The display lasted 15 minutes, and drew loud and long applause from the onlookers. No one else could match such a demonstration – and Wales were the winners! When they returned to Swansea news of their feat had preceded them, and they received a civic reception at the High Street station, with thousands of spectators. Led by a band generously provided by another Troop (Bonymaen) they marched through cheering crowds to their headquarters at the Chapel, where there were many speeches and a ‘victory supper’. The main legacy of this momentous occasion was a new flag – and the motto ‘It shall be done’.

Connections with the Chapel remained close, and the group hosted Local Association parade services on at least two occasions. On the 15th November 1925 300 scouts and cubs attended and Rover Scout Glyn Hughes played the
organ; while in July 1933 an attendance of over 400 filled the chapel and gallery. On that occasion an old Wesley Scout preached, (The Rev. W.B.J. Martin, a Congregationalist Minister) and King’s Scouts James Dadds and Albert Murray read the lessons. The Group was large and flourishing, and on 16th January 1932 when the Prince of Wales visited Swansea we learn that no fewer than 110 Wesley Scouts and Cubs were present in the Drill Hall. Swimming was the troop’s particular forte. They won the Local Association championship every year from 1930 to 1933, and after another victory in 1935 were allowed to keep the trophy. Some 60 members of the group belonged to the Swansea Swimming Club; many were awarded life saving medals, and some became national champions.

In 1936 the Boss decided to start a Sea Scout section on the novel principle of making it an ‘elite unit’ open only to those who held the King’s Scout Badge. By 1938 it numbered over 30. The section had originally been given an 18 foot sailing dingy, but by 1938 it had two sailing boats and a boathouse on the River Tawe. In 1939 the Group celebrated its 21st birthday by holding its annual camp at Saunterfoot, a venue to which the Sea Scouts were able to sail. In the same year a choir was formed under ASM Len Richards, which went on to win the Chief Choral at the Scout Eisteddfod. The Cub Pack was always rather overshadowed by the Scout Troop, but it went back to 1919, and included some notable personalities among its leaders. However, the Second World War was to prove fatal to the 24th. It senior members and leaders were depleted by the needs of the armed forces, and the Chapel was destroyed by German bombs in 1941. Although it was reported in April 1942 that the troop was ‘holding together well’ – thereafter it disappears from the records.

The 31st (Robin Hoods Own) was registered with the Swansea Association on the 9th February 1921, and with Headquarters in London before the 23rd. The Rev. Arthur Bromham was the founder and original leader, assisted by William Young, and the Wolf Cub Pack was led by Mrs Esther Saunders. At this stage there were 30 Scouts in the Troop, and 12 Cubs in the Pack. Both Sections originally met at the Southville Hall in Walters Road.

There was at first tremendous enthusiasm, within three months – on the 14th May – the new Group featured prominently in the Local Association’s Jamboree, held at the Vetch Field. The boys, all clad in uniform blue shirts with green scarves, gave a display of physical training, which was a normal activity at that time. Before the end of the year Arthur Bromham had moved away to a cure in Leeds, and the Troop was taken over by Albert Woolley. Enthusiasm, however, for the time being remained undiminished. In July 1922 the Cubs competed with six other Packs for the trophy of a totem pole, and in May the Scouts were the first winners of the Sims shield, presented by George Simms of Birmingham for annual competition by the Scouts of the District. The Troop’s first recorded camp was held at Parc-le-Breos in 1923, and in 1925 the Pack’s Akela, Miss M.E. Davies, was appointed District Cubmaster, a position of some responsibility as the District had by then 516 Scouts and Cubs.

The group’s activities were also noticed by the local press. An article in the Sporting News in 1926 recorded that four of the 31st Swansea Cubs had secured
their collectors badge

A Whitsun camp took place at Bishopston in that year, and was followed by a longer summer camp at Reynoldston, suggesting that this was a flourishing time for the 31st. During that same year boys from the Troop also took part in an extraordinary rescue. The Swansea Town Commissioner was running a bridge building course at Clyne, when in the course of the afternoon they were appealed to by a rider whose horse had become stuck in a neighbouring ditch. Using their bridge building equipment, the Scouts effected a dramatic rescue! By this time the group had moved from Southville Hall and were operating out of the old Scout Shop in Mansel Street.

By this time, the figures suggest that enthusiasm was waning. When the District paraded at Mount Zion Chapel on 13th February 1927, the 31st had only 14 Scouts and 11 Cubs, with 4 leaders, 3 of them in the pack. Two years later the cubs were up to 16 (with two Leaders), but the Scouts were down to 10, with one Leader as before. This was contrary to the trend in the District as a whole because by 1931, the year in which the Town Commissioner, Cliff Davies, received the Silver Wolf, the total number had risen to 1500. In that same year the 31st took part in a Scout Pageant at Singleton Park, but the numbers in the Group at that time are unknown. Apparently the decline continued because only 6 Cubs and one Leader attended the District parade in 1933, although the fact that the Pack was able to run a (very unsuccessful) football team suggest a lack of enthusiasm for parades rather than a chronic shortage of numbers.

By 1934 the fortunes of the Group had revived. Mrs Adams and Miss Hare continued to run the Pack, but the Troop was revitalised by Clive Adams and a contingent from Treborth, and that had a positive effect upon the Pack as well. The increase in numbers was not dramatic (16 Cubs and 14 Scouts in 1935), but the sparkle had definitely returned. Clive Adams was also appointed District Scoutmaster, a new leader, Mrs Thomas was awarded the Wood Badge, and two further Leaders – Mr and Mrs Jeffries – were recruited, all in 1935. Regular camps are always a sign of a good Troop, and the 31st camped at Rhosilli, Mumbles and Caswell at about this time. Thanks to Mr Adams and his accordion, their campfires were also quite something, and even featured on the front page of *The Herald of Wales* on 9th July 1938. Just before the outbreak of the Second World War the Group moved from Mansel Street, and for the next ten years met at the Plasmarl School. This had the great advantage that during the blackout most of the boys had a much shorter distance to travel. Wartime restrictions also diverted camping from the coast to Monmouth, which proved to be an excellent centre for all sorts of activities, from visits to Tintern Abbey or Symonds Yat to cooking competitions and camp fires in fancy dress. Clive Adams continued in charge throughout the war, and by 1947 was presiding over an energetic fund raising campaign. In that same year he went with a party of King’s Scouts to the World Jamboree at Moisson in France.

In 1948 the fundraising finally bore fruit when the Group acquired a plot of land at the far end of Emlyn Terrace, and was able to erect its own headquarters for the first time.

The ‘new building’ was in fact two old builders huts from Penlan joined together. This was not palatial, but it was a proper home, and with a field at the rear and
ample storage space, it was a great success. Lionel Prosser painted it throughout with scenes from *The Jungle Book*, and gave it a real Scouting atmosphere. Soon after, in 1950, the Adamsees moved away to Manchester, each having received the Medal of Merit for their work with the 31st. They left the Group in good heart. The census of 1949 does not record the number of Cubs, but there were 19 Scouts and 18 Senior Scouts – the new section just introduced at that time. For the next three and a half years Len Cooper was the Group Scoutmaster, and he was supported by a strong team. In 1952 the Troop’s summer camp was memorable held at the extremely muddy Welsh Jamboree at Picton Castle in Pembrokeshire. By this time the Group was deriving maximum benefit from having its own headquarters within a close knit community like Plasmarl. There was no maintained Youth Club, no Boys Brigade, and no Army Cadets, so the Scouts had the field to themselves, and community relations were excellent. Every enterprising little boy wanted to be a Cub.

In 1955 Len Cooper stood down and Ron Vickery took over as Group Scoutmaster, having worked his way up through the sections. He was still in post when the Group celebrated its 50th birthday in 1971. Supporting him, the Scouter team remained stable for a number of years. Mrs Morrissey ran the pack for 13 ½ years; Terry Stephens and Don Morrissey both held Scouter warrants for 12 years. Numbers appear to have fluctuated somewhat unpredictably, but with such stable leadership that may have more to do with the system of recording than with the actual situation. The Group’s favourite camping area continued to be Monmouth, although a number of different sites were tried. After 1964 this tradition was discontinued, and since then the Troop has camped at Tipperary and Arklow (Ireland), Kington (Herefordshire) and Ilfracombe (Devon). Combined camps at Silver Cross (with other Troops) became a feature of the late 1960s. Alan Nelson took over a somewhat flagging troop in 1963 and revived it for a number of years. Fund raising has been a feature of Group activity since the war, with whist drives, jumble sales and bingo evenings predominating. In 1956 the headquarter’s floor was replaced as a result of such activities, and there were numerous other benefits after that. After 1969 continuity of leadership was a constant problem. In that year Gary Evans at the age of 19 was Acting Scoutmaster, in charge of a troop numbering about 20. Many notable figures in Swansea Scouting passed through the 31st during the 1960s, including Alan Nelson and Gary Evans, but after Don Morrissey left stable leadership was hard to find. The end of the Group was a sad one. In 1980 the cherished headquarters was burned down by vandals, and all its fitting destroyed. The 31st never recovered from the blow, and closed shortly after.

During its existence the Group saw many achievements. 14 King’s Scout and 4 Queen’s Scout awards were gained by its members, several of whom went on to become Leaders, either with the Troop or elsewhere. Two Cornwall Scout Badges for exceptional courage and endurance were earned by Ron Vickery and Alan Nelson, both of whom eventually ran the Troop. Four Medals of Merit and two Long Service Decorations were also gained. Eight Leaders at different time held the Wood Badge. Above all, however, the Group was a prominent feature of its local community, and it may well have been changes in that community, as much as the efforts of the vandals, which meant that it eventually ceased to be viable.
The 32nd (Rhyddings Park) originated in a meeting held in the Chapel School Room in Brynmill on the 21st January 1926. The meeting was convened by A.T. Moulton and attended by twelve boys. It was decided to start a Scout Troop under the auspices of the Sunday School, and Mr. Moulton became the first Scout Master. He had two assistants, and the support of a committee. On the 11th March the boys were invested and warrants presented to the Leaders. At about the same time a Wolf Cub Pack was formed under the leadership of William Nelson. The names of all the original Cubs and Scouts are recorded, and many of them went on to hold warrants and other positions of responsibility, both within the Group and beyond. Clifford Jones, one of the original Cubs recently handed over as Group President to Donald Anderson, MP, another former Rhyddings scout.

By April 1926 a team of lay instructors had also been recruited, and the committee (what would later be known as a Group Executive Committee) was put on a regular basis. The first year was very active, culminating in a summer camp at Kennixstone Farm near Llangennith from the 31st July to the 7th August. By the following March, a year after its inauguration, the numbers in the Troop had risen to 29. By the end of 1928 the Pack and the Troop, which had hitherto operated separately, came together to form a Group, by which time also a Rover Crew had been formed.

In 1929 two Scouts from the Troop (Harrison Jones and Ron Eynon) attended the Arrowe Park Jamboree, and that tradition was maintained in Hungary in 1933 and Holland in 1937. It was in 1933 that the Group started to wear the Swansea Castle badge on their neckerchiefs in recognition of their representative function (it is still worn) and one of the Scouts who went to Holland (Norman Arnold) has given the Group his memorabilia, including a photograph, map and postage stamps.

At first all Sections of the Group met at the Rhyddings CM Church, but in 1930 the Rovers acquired a Den over a garage at the back of King Edward Road, and by 1940 all the Sections were meeting there. At the end of the war these facilities were thought to be inadequate, and in 1945 a Nissen Hut was acquired in Bryn Road. The search for a permanent Headquarters then commenced, but it was only after nearly twenty years of searching and fundraising, that the present Headquarters (also in Bryn Road) was acquired in 1964. Part of that building had belonged to the ATC, and as early as 1967 the Group Committee was looking for ways to expand and improve. However, in spite of nearly forty years of aspirations and fund raising, the Headquarters is still as it was – and the money raised has gone on repairs.

Like other Troops, during the war the 32nd struggled for leaders and for about two years was run by its Patrol Leaders without adult support – a great tribute to their training. After 1967 the Group consisted of Cubs, Scouts and Senior Scouts, but the latter, having in due course become Venture Scouts are now no more. However, at the other end of the age range a Beaver Colony has been added. In 2001 the Troop celebrated its 75th birthday, and it was on that occasions that Cliff Jones stood down as Group President. His successor Donald Anderson took over at the Anniversary Dinner, held at the Ramada Jarvis Hotel,
Llansamlet on the 2nd November. Since then Donald has retired as an MP, and become Lord Anderson of Swansea.

The present GSL is Hedley Jones who became a Scout with the Troop in 1962, and returned after a spell away, in 1978.

Footnote: West Glamorgan is presently (2007) undergoing further reorganisation under a new Area commissioner (Rob Lloyd), under which all the Districts will be combined and the campsites will become the responsibility of the Area Executive.

The 2006 census returns show a total of 1340 Scouts and 204 Leaders in the Area, divided between 39 active Groups. The biggest district is Afan Nedd, with 438 Scouts and 61 Leaders. Watch this space!

Authorship of this section on Glamorgan West is by Dr Elwyn Davies and Professor David Loades

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**Mid Glamorgan**

This Area was formerly known as East Glamorgan, and included Cardiff. Although a certain amount of evidence survives in the form of basic statistics, there are very few records of early Scout activity. The movement started in 1908, as it did across most of South Wales, the first Troop being recorded at Penarth before the end of that year. Another formed at Aberdare in 1909, and twenty seven others followed before the outbreak of the first World War. The first surviving report dates from 1922, and gives the very large totals of 4500 boys, 336 leaders and 103 Groups. There were, apparently, rather more Scouts and rather fewer Wolf Cubs than had been the case in the previous year, but what they were doing has passed without surviving record. We know that in 1933 there was a County dinner, because it was attended by Sir Percy Everett, by then a Chief Scout’s Commissioner, and by 1935 the Miskin camp site had been in existence long enough to be holding reunions, but we know very little about what went on there. In the same year the Scouts of ‘outwards’ East Glamorgan joined with those of Cardiff to welcome the Prince of Wales to Sophia Gardens, and between then and 1939 no fewer than 16 new Scout Headquarters were built with aid from the National Council of Social Services. It must have been nice to be appreciated with such gestures!

Regular reports do not begin until 1952, when we are told that no fewer than 1000 Scouts from the County attended the Welsh Jamboree at Picton Castle. The first recorded County Camp was held at Miskin in 1956, and a party from East Glamorgan helped out at the Commonwealth Games at Cardiff in 1958. By 1960 Scouting was a large and flourishing youth movement, and in 1962 there were 55 Queen’s Scout awards in the county, which was not only a record, but probably more than in the rest of Wales put together. By 1969 the census showed 4500 Scouts, now organised into nine Districts and 100 Groups, figures which bear a remarkable resemblance to those for 1922, except that there had been a considerable dip during the war. East Glamorgan was the largest Scout County in Wales by some margin, and memories of activities at that time must be still very much alive – except that they do not seem to have been recorded. The change in 1974 was mainly one of nomenclature. With a few fringe exceptions, East Glamorgan simply became Mid-Glamorgan, the Scout County following the local government boundaries. Being mainly urban, Mid Glamorgan was one of the first Counties to participate in the Scoutreach project in the 1970s. Full time workers are first mentioned in 1974, and in 1977 two professional Scouters were appointed, albeit on short term contracts. By 1978 Scoutreach was operating out of the County office in Caerphilly. Since then Local Government has again been reorganised, although without much affecting the Scouts, but both numbers and ambition have declined. In 1994 the new county of Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan was separated from Mid-Glamorgan, and the new Scout Area of CATVOG came into existence.
Montgomery

Early scouting records are minimal. We know that four Troops were established in 1910 (at Welshpool, Llanfyllin, Llanidloes and Machynthlleth) and that ten had come into existence by 1914, but we know very little about them, and by 1922 the total was down to four. Montgomery is, and always has been, a rural county, and the dispersal of the population has caused constant problems for a 'meeting organisation' like the Scouts. By 1953 numbers had fallen from an unknown peak to 185, which was attributed to the lack of leaders and resulting closure of Groups. However, two years later the story was happier. Numbers were up to 221 and groups now numbered ten. Through the 1960s the numbers remained more or less stable at between 220 and 250, and the number of groups hovered between nine and ten. In 1963 a County camp was recorded for the first time, and two training weekends were run in 1966, a year which also saw a visit from the Chief Scout, who was received with appropriate ceremony. The 1970s were a decade of achievement. 200 Cubs attended a County Day in 1973 (which must have been just about every Cub in the County), and in 1977 the census figure broke 500 for the first time, rising further in the following year. In 1974 the administrative county was absorbed into the new construct of Powys, but in this case the Scout County did not follow suit. Nevertheless Scouting has been, and still is, strongly supported by the Local Authority.
Pembrokeshire

In addition to the material assembled by Mike Rowe, and presented in the continuous history of Pembrokeshire, the following information has also come to hand.

In 1956 a Pembroke District Scout Progress camp was held, in which six Pembroke and Pembroke Dock troops took part, and the adjudicators comments make interesting reading. On the whole the Patrol Leaders were adequate, but too many Scouters tried to do too much themselves. Ceremonies such as a flag break and prayers left a good deal to be desired in some cases, although one or two Troops were commended. Cleanliness was good, but there was little imagination displayed in craft work, and uniforms were often incomplete. Church attendance was about 70%, but there was little response to a competition designed to stimulate interest in The Scout magazine. Spot tests of Scouting skills produced mixed results, and the standard of camping ‘could only be described as fair’. They concluded with the somewhat equivocal observation that the purpose of the camp had been to raise standards, and they hope that would be the result.

Let us not delude ourselves that Scouting was always perfect in the ‘good old days’!

In the 1960s The Pembrokeshire Guardian ran a regular Scout column, and a typical entry from February 1964 covered the following items of interest. First, all motor cycle and scooter riders were urged to set a good example by wearing crash helmets. It was noted that the 3rd Pembroke Dock had formed a Rover Crew with ten members, and that a forthcoming issue of the BBC programme ‘Songs of Praise’ would come from Baden Powell House and would feature choirs of Scouts and Guides. One of the Sixth Pembroke Air Scouts was joining the navy, and the Cub Pack had given a party for the residents of the Riverside Hospital. Recent awards and badges were listed, and it was announced that a forthcoming issue of the Sunday Times colour supplement would feature the Scout movement in a favourable light. It would be interesting to know what the columnist found to say in other weeks.

In 1967 the Scouts of Pembroke issued what was described as a ‘Souvenir Brochure’, which consisted mainly of photographs, some of which are reproduced here, but which also contained a ‘Diamond Jubilee’ exhortation from the District Commissioner, W.W. Robinson, and another from the district Information Officer. Each of the Groups in the District then contributed a short text describing their recent activities, which acted as extended captions to the photographs.
Radnorshire

Scouting got off to an early start in Radnor. We have an ancient Troop Flag in Llandrindod Scout Centre which shows that there were enough Scouts in the County to have a rally in 1909! Llandrindod, Rhayader and Glasbury all started Troops within the first three years of the publication of Scouting for Boys. Often the younger sons of the big houses were the first Leaders - in Glasbury the daughters of the big house, the Misses Butler, first began a reading club for the boys of the area and then took up Scouting. Or clergymen saw Scouting as a fun part of their ministry like the Reverend Thomas with Builth Road Troop. Or teachers used their teaching skills to introduce the fascination of the outdoors like Mr Roberts of the Highland Moors School Troop, Llandrindod.

Llandrindod and Glasbury are the only Troops to have had a continuous existence since their initiation but many other Troops and Packs have flourished for a time. There was the second Troop at Highland Moors, Llandrindod, which finished when the School closed. Builth Road Troop was strong in the 1930s but failed during the War. Knighton closed in the early nineties when Mrs Kell retired due to ill health but Knucklas took up the challenge in 1997 and has continued since. Kington which once considered itself part of Radnorshire had a Troop which took part in a day of sports with Llandrindod Troop in 1918.

Baden Powell came to inspect the County Scouts in 1920 on the Ddole fields in Llandrindod and the Prince of Wales, later Edward VIII came and camped with us on the Ddole and took part in a camp fire - his campfire blanket is kept in the Radnorshire Museum.
The various Chief Scouts have come to inspect and have given their opinion that Scouting in Radnorshire is about ‘back to basics’.

We have several trophies, presented by wealthy patrons, still competed for annually - a silver Walking Scout for lightweight camping competition, a silver Rose Bowl for the cooking competition, presented by the family at Pencerrig House, now a hotel, and the Worthington Cup presented by Dr Worthington of Llandrindod. And land was given by benefactors convinced of the value of Scouting - a quarter of an acre given by wealthy Thomas Lant of Llandrindod for the Quarry Lane Scout Hut in 1937 and that given by the Butler family to Glasbury Troop in the nineteen twenties as well as several acres of land suitable for backwoods camping near Bleddfa, and the Presteigne Hut is built with bricks given by Commander Beebee, a former County Commissioner.

The Wales HQ was in South Crescent, Llandrindod, and this was of great help to Scouting in the town and Radnorshire. Many of the Welsh Scout hierarchy lived nearby, Lord Glanusk in Erwood and Lord Swansea near Builth Wells and the owners of big houses often lent their gardens for camping - the Pencerrig Gardens were used by Llandrindod Troop, the Gwernyfed grounds were used by Glasbury, the Vicarage grounds at Crossgates were used for patrol camps, Glanstephan lands were opened to Scout and Guide camps until very recently and the Ddole Race Course at Llandrindod was often used for Scouting events. Through the years there have always been County Rallies and Camps and Activities.

In 1909 there was the County Rally, there were County camps and competitions throughout the twenties and all Groups took part in the Peace Festival in 1930 on the Ddole. At Glanstephan there was a training camp in about 1936 where Scouts learnt to light a fire with 2 matches using natural materials like dried holly leaves and birch bark and then how to cook a meal over the embers.

Nowadays, for Scouts, there is the County Camp with competitions in orienteering, cooking, and first aid, the Raft
Race down stream on the Wye at Glasbury, and an annual Swimming Competition. For Cubs and Beavers there are Fundays, Swimming Competitions and sometimes County Cub Camps and County Beaver Sleepovers. And of course inter-Group camps and activities. We also have the annual St George’s Day Church Parade and Funday for Beavers, Cubs and Scouts and some Groups celebrate St David’s Day in the same way. Radnor Scouts have always joined in with international events from the very first Jamboree at Wembley and have always had representatives at the Jamborees.

Glasbury is the lucky owner of an actual arrow from the Golden Arrow Jamboree at and Llandrindod was the proud troop to produce the Scout who unveiled the 50 year monument on Brownsea Island. In the 1930s Bonfires were lit to celebrate the Coronation of King George VI of England and, in 1980 Bonfires were lit to celebrate the official set-up of the European Union. And this year we are taking part in Centenary Celebrations and some are hoping to earn all four of the Centenary badges!

At the present time our Area Commissioner is getting hot under the collar because so many of our Scouters have multiple responsibilities and many are getting towards or are over retirement age but according to records and logbooks this has always been the case in Radnorshire if not everywhere.
Reg Villiers of Welsh Scout HQ was Rover Leader for Llandrindod and Secretary of the Local Association, Mrs Davies of was Cub Leader in Llandrindod and Howey, Mr Grey was Group Scout Leader in Howey and Scout Leader in Newbridge, Miss Judith Butler remained Akela in Glasbury into her 80s. So people who hold appointments as AACs but also run Packs or Scout Troops, or refuse to be retired at 65 are carrying on the same tradition.
Radnorshire, although a long way from headquarters in Cardiff and further from London, has always joined in wholeheartedly with the Scouting ethos. We may not be quite as smart or as up to date as Cardiff or the Home Counties but we do it our way. We have strong local loyalties and our Groups are small, based on villages and small towns, but that's the way we like it and we know that a phone call away is Shirley Myall of the Welsh Scout Council or the UK Enquiry Office and a mere 15 or 20 miles away by road is another branch of the Scouting family.

**BRIEF HISTORIES of GROUPS**

Some of these are from personal memories, some from notebooks or logbooks, a bit from official records, but I haven't asked HQ for records or been through newspaper accounts which must surely exist. 1929 seems to have been a year of expansion in Radnorshire because several Groups were started then. We have several Radnorshire Year Books from the 1930s and these show several Troops or Packs which no longer exist - Llyswen, Clyro, Howey, Builth Road, St Harmon, Radnor Valley, Llangunllo, New Radnor, Highland Moors. Of most there seems to be no record although Howey and Builth Road have left some fond memories. At the moment we have six Groups. Rhayader with a Cub Pack, Newbridge with Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. Llandrindod with Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, both Knucklas and Presteigne with Cubs only and Glasbury with Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers.
1st RADNOR VALLEY

The New Radnor Troop must have been very strong at one time because they ran a local Football League, the Radnor Valley Boy Scouts Cup, which was affiliated to the Football Association of Wales. They used to meet in the first storey Hall which at one time was the meeting place of the County Council when New Radnor was the County Town of Radnor but the Group has disappeared. It might have been active after the war because the County Scouters meeting was held in that Hall and I remember vaguely some evidence of Scouting in the nineteen seventies when Commander Beebee was Commissioner.

1st HOWEY GROUP

The Howey Troop was strong throughout the 1930s but seems to have faded with the trials of wartime.

Howey was started in 1929. George Villiers of the Welsh Scout HQ was Scout Master until 1932 when ASM Perry who had been doing a lot of the work according a notebook we have, ‘was promoted to Scoutmaster’. There is no record of a Cub Pack but that does not mean there weren’t Cubs - just that no record exists.

Numbers hovered around a dozen but camps were enjoyed and competitions were entered and Good Turns worthy of note were recorded - ‘One Scout milked 2 cows for an old gentleman, 85yrs of age, to enable him and his daughter to go away over the weekend’! Another Scout went to Llandrindod 2.5 miles away at 11pm one night ‘to get medicine for a sick person’ - we are not told whether he was able to use
a bike but several Scouts were reported as ready to be tested for the Cyclists Badge.

Uniforms and games kit were apparently bought for the boys and were lent to them for special occasions such as the sports day when the Peter Freeman Cup was competed for at Builth Road or the visit of welcome to the Chichester Boys Club on the Ddole at Llandrindod, unless the parents were able to afford to pay for it gradually.

Dr Griffiths of Maesgwynne gave a tent, which at that time would have been a bell tent which was pitched in Mr Perry’s field near his house, Greenfields, and the Patrols took it in turns to sleep in it

1st BUILTH ROAD GROUP

Builth Road Troop existed in 1926 and a Cub Pack as well. They met in the Iron Room at Cwm Bach. The Reverend Thomas of Great House, Cwm Bach, was the Vicar and attended at the Cwm Bach Primary School which served Builth Road as well so he had a captive audience of boys eager for adventure. There were 13 boys in the Troop and 11 Wolf Cubs under the leadership of Wolf Cub Master, Miss Anderson. The Troop continued up to the early 1940s but there is no record or memory of the Wolf Cub Pack in the mid thirties nor record when it finished. The Peter Freeman Relay Race Cup presented in 1930 was being competed for in the 1960s and still exists - the last holder being Brian Mason of Newbridge on Wye Troop.

In 1931 the Troop took part in the Masque of Empire on the Ddole, Llandrindod. In 1937 they lit a huge bonfire as part of the chain of fires celebrating the Coronation on Kincoed Farm behind the Church and the Rovers were Morse signalling with an Aldis Lamp to a Group (perhaps Llandrindod) on the Carneddau Hills. The great rivals were Glasbury and at the Gwernyfed Jamboree they almost won the 'Push-the-12ft-rubber-ball' competition coming second in the knockout competition to Glasbury.
The Rev Thomas paid for a Scout to go to the Hungary Jamboree and would often help pay for uniforms or camp fees. The ASM was Mr Rogers and by 1940 he had taken over but he came under a cloud and gave up. Training Camps were held at Kinsley Wood and it was here that Bill Davies who has helped with his personal memories of his Scouting days actually lit his fire with 2 matches and cooked his meal. His favourite camp meal was sausage in a damper he said. In the photograph of the Troop you can see one Scout at the right hand side with his sleeves not rolled up. This was Bill who was late for the meeting and rushed into place at the last moment - did he get a telling off by the Rev Thomas for 'spoiling' the line up! In the late nineteen thirties the SM was Algernon Brown, 'Biffy'. There were 20 Scouts and they met in a Scout Hut erected opposite the Church, next to the School yard. They camped often at Clarach Bay and in 1939, just before the War, went to Luffmanham, Rutland, for a week.

Two Groups have started up since the War. Llanbister and Knucklas.

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1st LLANBISTER GROUP

Llanbister Group was started by the Reverend CA Weale. Someone kept a logbook of Troop meetings 1961 - 1962 which includes amusing sketches of the 1961 Jamboree Camp at Gwernyfed. The Troop was taken over by Ron Morgan after the Jamboree when Colin Weale left the area. There was friendly cooperation with
the Llandrindod Troop and Les Hope of Llandrindod was Llanbister’s ASM at the Jamboree. According to the logbook there were 10 boys on the books but at some meetings only 3 or 4 turned up.

There must have been Cubs as well because they are mentioned in the logbook as visiting the Jamboree and as sending boys up to the Troop, but no other record.

1st KNUCKLAS GROUP

1st Knucklas Group began in 1997. It now takes in girls and boys from Knighton as well as Knucklas as there is no Group in Knighton. Easy access to the village Community Centre was a great advantage at first. Fortunes have fluctuated with the availability of Leaders. At one time there were Beavers, Cubs and Scouts and camps in neighbouring farmers’ fields, but as Leaders were forced to resign by ill health or moving away there is only a Cub Scout Pack functioning at the moment. The young people are still as keen. When there was a Troop in Presteigne the Scouts used to go over there to meetings but then that Troop also fell by the wayside.

However, as we speak the meetings are going to change to Knighton Church Hall as the Community Centre badly needs renovating and there is a rumour of a Scout Leader and an Assistant who might be willing to re-open the Troop! What wonderful good news.

1st PRESTEIGNE GROUP
This Group also suffers from a paucity of Leaders and now only consists of a Cub Scout Pack but it has an illustrious past. In 1932 they were meeting in the Scout Room in Church Street and had obviously been established for some time. They crop up in records we’ve got in the fifties and seventies and in the eighties their Scout Hut was built on the Town Playing Field with bricks left to Radnorshire Scout County by a former County Commissioner, Commander Beebee. In 1959 they went with Skip, John Knill, to the Walesby International Scout Camp in Sherwood Forest. Several times in the seventies and eighties they won County Awards for Swimming and Camping Competitions.

In the seventies Tony Napolitano was the Scouter and in 2000 their Leader was Doug Williams.

**1st NEWBRIDGE on WYE GROUP**

In 1928 the vicar at Newbridge built a corrugated iron hut lined with wooden panels in the vicarage garden for village societies to meet in which became known as the Vicarage Room (not ‘the Iron Room’ like its twin at Cwmbach) and it was used by the Troop as its meeting place until after the war when the Prisoner of War camp became available because the Italians were repatriated, and one of their huts was used by the British Legion as their Club House and rented it to the Group until the Legion ceased. By that time there were only Cubs and they met in the newly built School.
There is a Troop register for 1938 and it gives names of 10 boys not all Tenderfeet so the Troop must have been going for some time. In another section there are names of boys for 1957 so there might have been a hiatus during the war. Sergeant Tantrum, the local Policeman, used to take the boys for First Aid in the fifties and sixties. There was definitely a Cub Pack in the nineteen fifties which continued until the late eighties and a small Scout Troop in the seventies which with a contingent of only three won the First Aid, the Cooking and the County Flag Competitions at the 78 Camping Competition.

Anne Longbottom carried on the Cubs for some years and then there was another gap until 1996 when Beavers were started as part of the Llandrindod Group, which lead to Cubs and then to Scouts and the decision to become a separate Group in 2000 and now to Explorers. They have a programme firmly based on environment concerns and in 2005 the Group were runners-up in the Scout Headquarters contest to find the Greenest Group.
1st LLANDRINDOD GROUP

Llandrindod Scouts started in 1907 or early 1908 as Baden Powel acknowledged in 1920 when he visited and inspected Radnor Scouts. The Group has had the same registration number since Groups were given numbers which is something of a record - a few years ago there was danger of losing it by amalgamation with Newbridge but luckily the crisis passed and the two Groups are strong and happy to be cooperative rather than united. There are books of minutes of the Local Association in the 1920s and thirties but very little after that. For some time there were two troops, the Town or Church Troop and the School or Highlandmoors Troop. The minutes record the same problems as are common today - lack of money, places to meet, and Leaders while the Scouts are accused of vandalism and rowdy behaviour by landlords and unsympathetic outsiders.

One does wonder what the livestock thought of a Patrol camping somewhere at Builth Road in 1922 who made their morning ablutions in the water trough leaving the cattle’s drinking water all soapy! In 1933 when the Chief came once again to visit, a small lad, Christopher Urie, (who later was a choreographer for the Shakespeare Theatre Company), was a Wolf Cub. The Cubs and Scouts met on the Ddole and were told to lay down in the grass while waiting for the great man. Baden Powell strode out to the Grandstand podium and shouted out in ‘surprise’ . “But where are all the Cubs and Scouts?” At which all the boys got up and rushed towards him shouting and cheering! How exciting that must have been for an 8 year old.
In 1926 the Group managed to lease a small chapel as their HQ and meetings for Scouts and Rovers no longer had to take place here and there or in places ‘where the roof leaked’. And a Wolf Cub Pack - it is said the ‘first in Wales’, but perhaps they mean Radnor or even Llandrindod - was started under the aegis of Miss Powell Jones and again the Baden Powells were there to support local Scouting.

The Patrol Leaders were expected to take their Patrols on extra training meetings every week. Most of the PLs would already have been at work as they must have been 15 or 16 years old so it would have been a lot to ask. On Saturdays they practiced first aid, firelighting and cooking, sometimes they went hiking (on one occasion coming back ‘like drowned rats’).

The Town Troop and the Troop at the School struggled on through the War, the young men all being in the forces. In 1937, the lease of the Baptist Chapel having lapsed, Mrs Trollope of Grosvenor Road gave most of the £250 needed to build a wooden Scout Hut on land donated by the late Mr Lant. Her son who had been a keen Scout was killed in a flying accident while training in the Air Corps and she wished to remember him by this magnificent gift to the Local Association. The hut was to be called The Robert John Trollope Hut. During the War it was used for various things like organising the evacuees when they arrived, training sessions for the ARP etc. The Hut is still in the possession of the Scouts (it was transferred to the Group from the Local Association) but is now leased to the local St Johns Ambulance branch.

In the nineteen fifties Sidney Jones organised the Troop and produced Gang Shows and Music Halls in the Llandrindod Albert Hall. After National Service war some of the returning war heroes took up their Scouting again like Vincent Baker who off and on served as Assistant and Scout Leader and the Margrave Jones
brothers, Roy and Clive, who were Cub Leaders and Rovers, Clive later became District Commissioner.

1st KNIGHTON SCOUT TROOP

The Knighton Troop was registered in 1922 and is mentioned in the yearbooks of the 1930s right up to 1939. It took a big part in the Town Ceremonies and was very well regarded. Douglas Jones remembers on Civic Sundays the Scouts and Cubs, Guides and Brownies provided a Guard of Honour for the Mayor and his guests at the Church and walked beside his horse drawn carriage as he went to the local Hotel for the Reception. Douglas also remembers that about 1936 the Cubs travelled to camp at Cwmgwyn Old Quarry in a high sided flat trailer drawn by a Foden Road Tractor. The tents and cooking gear were supplied by the Territorial Army, and bracken had been cut for bedding. Before bed a huge bonfire was lit and there was food everywhere supplied by local farmers.

The Group certainly existed in the 1950s and through until 1986. Bill Prosser was Scout master for seven years and his sister was Cubmistress with 48 Cubs just after the war! She remembers 'What marvellous times we had - games outside and cooking over open fires and the boys so obedient'. Mrs Kell and her family held the Group together for years - she received the Silver Acorn in 1965 and a bar to it in 74. She was a wonderful organiser and caterer, cooking for County Camps for 50 or 60 boys on a couple of camp stoves. Her sons Kevin and Keith and daughter, were also involved and would help at Cub Camps. John Smith, the Glasbury SL remembers at Bwlch y Sarnau County Cub Camp throwing a wet
cloth at one of the helpers who, at that moment ducked, and the wet cloth caught Kevin full in the face. Kevin was a big lad so John thought it wise to disappear before he realised who had caught him out.

1st HAY on WYE GROUP

We have the Local Association Registration Form for 1912 for Hay and Talgarth (both in Brecon but always enfolded in the Radnorshire Scout County) showing that Mr Winstanley had 20 members in Hay and Mr Phillips 22 members in Talgarth. There must have been a gap because in 1926 Hay has joined up with Clyro and this continues right up to 1936, meeting in the Hay Drill Hall. They possibly continued but personal recollection of Denny Parry says that when the evacuees arrived in 1939/40 the Group had a new lease of life, meeting in the stables at the Castle both Cubs and Scouts. Denny went through Cubs, Scouts, and Rovers, then he did his National Service but came back and took up Scouting again as Leader.

In 1953 the Cubs and Scouts from the Methodist Church acted as Guard of Honour when the Queen came to ‘open’ the new Clairwen dam in the Elan Valley. When Sybil Jones appeared with her family of boys the, by now, Hay and Cusop Troop who met in the Cusop Hut began to hum. In 1975 they won most of the Camping Competition trophies, they raised funds by collecting newspaper and bought materials to build canoes, In 1975 and 1977 they helped to put on Pantomimes and Gang Shows with the help of the Glasbury Cubs, Michaelchurch Guides, Peterchurch Brownies and South Radnor Venture Scouts. Boys attended all the Wales Jamborees But there is no Group in Hay now.

1st GLASBURY GROUP

Glasbury Troop started in 1909 as is testified by a note in the logbook kept by Judith Butler - it was rather a sad note as it records the death of a former Scout in a flying accident. Glen Kidston was “the first to enrol as a Scout in 1909”. He died in 1931 while surveying air routes for the African postal service. The Glasbury Scout Hut which is still being well used today by
visiting Groups staying at weekends as well as by local organisations fundraising events and the Glasbury Group, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers, was opened officially on December 5th 1926. It was built on land given by the Butler family and financed by donations given by the ‘big houses’ round the area who have always supported Scouting so well.

The Misses Butler, Judith and Blanche were the powers behind the throne at the beginning, using Scoutmasters to front the Leadership of Scouts but in 1923 Judith received the Wolf’s Tooth which at that time was the Badge to show you had completed your Wolf Cub Training and in 1925 Blanche was registered as Scoutmaster for the Troop. The Cubs and Scouts joined in with all the County events - the Masque of Empire in 1931 and the County Camps. In 1929 Trefor Morgan received the Scout Gallantry Medal for saving a boy from drowning in the Wye.

The Butler ladies also took a strong lead in County meetings and training leaders in the County. As late as 1977 Judith was still Badge Secretary. She also retained the title of Akela - John Smith remembers when he was a Cub having to go to Aberllynfi House to recite his Law and Promise to Miss Judith because by the 1940s she not so spry as she had been and controlled things from her home base. John by the way has just completed his 40 years as a Leader of one sort or another in Radnorshire Scouting.

Glasbury has always sent boys (and now girls) to the Jamborees - they often mop up places surplus to requirements of more populated areas. There have been many Leaders Roy Hearn in the 1960s and Geoff McConnell, John Smith, Ron Squires, Colin James with the Troop but only 3 Cub Leaders since the beginning! The latest being Wendy Catch. The Beavers at the moment are lead by Heidi Lewis.

**1st WYE VALLEY GROUP**

This Group was registered as 1st Rhayader District Boy Scout Association in 1909 and Rhayader is the name it is known by locally but it meets in the village down the road called Cwmdeuddwr on the other side of the Wye. Major Roberts was the first Scoutmaster and their first camp was at Safn Coed in August, 1909. There are records of the Local Association meetings from the beginning till 1932 although meetings weren’t held very regularly.

In 1924 Scouts, Tudor Williams and John Lloyd, were commended for saving Bernard Morgan from drowning in the Wye - it was a local sport to jump from the bridge over the river into the deep water below the waterfall (Rhayader in Welsh means waterfall). John Lloyd died in 1990 and at his request his uniform and gallantry award were buried with him.

The Group continued although few records remain until after the Second World War and in the 1960s Mr and Mrs Hinnett, Bert Alberston and Marij Pugh ran Cubs and Scouts until 1974 when the Hinnetts left the area and the Group closed. It was in 1979 that the Group became known as 1st Wye Valley because it re-opened with the help of the Vicar of Cwmdeuddwr in Cwmdeuddwr Old
School and as usual boys flocked to join so that in 1991 there were 16 Cubs, 10 Scouts and 3 Ventures. Unfortunately when Bill Ireland, the Scout Leader, resigned because of his wife’s ill health the Troop folded and at the moment there are only Cubs. Any youngsters who want to continue Scouting have to join the Troops in Llanidloes (Montgomery) or Llandrindod.

1st BUILTH WELLS GROUP

From 1959 till 1970s this Group met in a hut on the Radnor side of the Wye although they were regarded as being part of the Brecon Scout County. I haven’t any information about Scouting in Builth except what was given me for these years. Police Sergeant Jack Simpson was the Scoutmaster assisted by Bryan Stephen, the math’s teacher at the High School. They held a meeting to see if there was any interest in about November 1959. The response was overwhelming. They had about 50 Scouts and 80 Cubs. The Cubs were divided into two Packs under Policeman Ralph Rees and Bernard Jukes, and the Scouts formed one big Troop. Bernard Jukes ran the one Pack for about 10 years. They did not go camping but they did have days of activities in the fields along the Wye.

At Easter in 1960 there was a fortnight’s camp at Aberduhonw farm to sort the would-be Scouts into patrols. Jack Simpson was a hard task master but the Troop thrived. Some boys who had been on the point of becoming ‘wrong-uns’ were straightened out and later became useful citizens. 5 or 6 young men gained their Queens Scout badge during the time Bryan Stephens was involved so the Rovers must have been part of the set up doing their own training while helping the Troop.

Camping was the basis of the Troop’s training. There were camps at Lowes Court, Clyro, Bredwardine. One time Mr Stephens remembers, Jack took the oldest boys down the Wye to Chepstow on a canoe trip, leaving him behind with 30 boys to pack up camp. To collect the rest of the Troop a minibus was loaned to them by Mr Higginbottom the District Commissioner. The 20 Scouts and their equipment piled in to get everything back to Builth and the Police Inspector’s son was one of them!

Mr Stephens stayed with the Troop for 5 years but pressure of work meant that the two meetings a week plus numerous weekend camps became too demanding, Sergeant Simpson continued with the help of Don Jones who eventually took over as Scoutmaster but Jack was a hard act to follow and eventually by 1970 the Troop had fizzled out. The Cubs continued for a while and a new Scout Hut was built for them in Builth town but without leaders the Group folded and later the Hut was sold.

1st LLANWRTYD

During the War Danny Davies, the local Headmaster, ran the Cubs and Scouts and had about 25 boys enjoying Scouting. When he retired Bryn Jones was asked to take over and he asked his workmate, Peter Sutton, to help him. They too ran the Cubs and Scouts together. They had a special Scout Hall by the side
of the Bell Inn with all sorts of gym equipment in it. It is now part of the Bell. They had 4 ridge tents and went camping at Penybont in the Abergwesin Valley. At camp they went tracking and did nature study, the Leaders would hide and the Scouts would try to find them. They did the cooking centrally with ex army equipment.

After about 5 years the venture folded and since then although there have been sporadic attempts to get going it has not worked. Recently Janet Bigood ran the Cubs for a while and then tried to do Scouts but felt she did not have the support and gave up.

ROVERS, VENTURES, EXPLORERS

Under the system of Rovers of course the young men of over 18 just remained with the Troop, becoming young leaders in all but name and taking part in the activities of the Troop such as camping as this photo of 4 Rovers who were camping at Weston super Mare in 1922. When the Venture Scout system took over Glasbury and Llandrindod had Venture Scout Units. Llandrindod took advantage of the ruling that girls could join the Unit, concentrated on Duke of Edinburgh Award training and had the first Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Glasbury went camping abroad and joined with Hay Scouts in their pantomimes and gang shows and many young men went to the Jamborees.

George Cootes was VSL The Explorer Scouts are doing very well at Glasbury under Peter Mayall (who has come up through the Group and now has sons and daughters in the Group) and have a full programme, Newbridge and Llandrindod are just about to start Explorer training as their Troops have not had the advantage of continuous existence and the boys and girls are just getting to 14 years of age. The Explorer Unit will have to be organised like a trefoil as distance make it difficult to have weekly combined meetings.
Snowdonia and Anglesey Area. (Rhanbarth Eryri a Môn)

Introduction.

Every part of the Scout Area has some records, unfortunately, the quantity varies, most are incomplete with large gaps. Few Groups have a complete history – even those in Caernarfon, Holyhead, Llandudno and Colwyn Bay that started very early and are still active. Some Groups, such as Rhos on Sea have been fortunate in finding someone to take an active interest in the Group and to search out unknown history. Some Groups are lucky to have leaders who take an interest in their past history. Some archives have been deposited in the County Record Offices, others are known to have been destroyed! Some items still turn up unexpectedly, like half the programme of a Beaumaris Scout concert held in April 1910 which, along with a mass of other unrelated papers, arrived in Llangefni Record Office in February 2007.

Boundaries

When the County of Gwynedd (formed in 1974) was separated into three Unitary Authorities in April 1996, the Scout County of Gwynedd became an Area. Since one of the new Unitary Authorities decided to be known by the name “Gwynedd” (the other two were Anglesey and Conwy) the new Scout Area was forced to find another name. Hence it became Snowdonia and Anglesey Area (Rhanbarth Eryri a Môn)

The new Area encompasses the same ground as the former Gwynedd County with the addition of Colwyn Bay and Abergele and surrounding countryside, formerly part of Clwyd Scout County (and before then the old West Denbighshire). They joined the former District of Aberconwy now to be known as Conwy District with DC Joan Hammond. Also, the two Districts of North and South Anglesey were merged to form the Isle of Anglesey District with DC George O’Dell. The other Districts remained unchanged: Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa) albeit the Arfon District re-named, with DC Ian Franks; Dwyfor with DC Jill Gloster and Merioneth (Meirionnydd) with DC Gwyn Williams.

Conwy District has seen the most change. From 1908 until 1974 the geographical area that is currently Conwy County Borough, was shared between the old counties of Caernarfonshire and Denbighshire with the river Conwy forming most of the boundary.

In 1913 Denbighshire Scouting made an administrative division into East and West. (Earlier than this there were 3 districts, West Denbighshire, Wrexham and Mid Denbighshire) Caernarfonshire divided into North and South in 1929. From the North Caernarfonshire area, the former Scout Districts of Llanfairfechan, Conwy, Llandudno and Conwy Valley are within the new county
whilst from West Denbighshire came the districts of Colwyn Bay, Abergele and Llanrwst.

These 7 Scout districts have now been reduced to 3. Aberconwy and Llandudno Districts in Gwynedd were first merged to form Aberconwy District in 1995, and then the Colwyn and Abergele Districts of Clwyd joined Aberconwy District in the new County Borough of Conwy in 1996, when the 1994 Local Government Re-organisation Act was implemented on April 1st.

In 2006 the two districts of Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa), and Dwyfor merged to form the new Scout District of Gwynedd with DC of Dwyfor, Tudor Bell becoming DC of the new Gwynedd District and the former DC of Snowdon District, Iorwerth Michael, becoming his Deputy DC. Merioneth (Meirionnydd) remained a separate District with Laurence Hooban as District Commissioner.

Gwynedd Scout County came into being in April 1974 when the whole of Wales was re-organised from the 13 traditional counties into the larger new counties. The former counties of Caernarvonshire, Merioneth and Anglesey became Gwynedd. The 3 former Scout Counties all had a County Commissioner and Anglesey County Commissioner Iorwerth (Iori) Wynn Jones was appointed the first County commissioner of Gwynedd with the Rev. Philip Butler (County Commissioner for Caernarvonshire) as Deputy County Commissioner. When Mr Jones retired from post in 1978, Rev. Butler became the Gwynedd County Commissioner and served for 10 years. When he retired, Prof. David Loades became Acting County Commissioner and on his departure from Bangor and becoming Chief Commissioner for Wales, the County was left leaderless for a while until the Rev. Gwyndaf Hughes took over the helm. Unfortunately, he was only in post for a few months and the county again lacked a County Commissioner. Luckily for Gwynedd, a certain Mountain Adviser had arrived in the county by then and in March 1989, John Muston became County Commissioner. This heralded a ten year period of stability, re-organisation and consolidation. In April 1996, local authority reorganisation resulted in Gwynedd Scout County becoming Snowdonia and Anglesey Area and John Muston was transformed into the Area Commissioner. In February 2000, his term of office came to an end and Jill Gloster, then DC Dwyfor, was appointed Area Commissioner and continued John Muston’s good work despite lacking several key personnel.

In October 2006, Jill Gloster became Chief Commissioner of Wales leaving Snowdonia and Anglesey again bereft of an Area Commissioner. However, all was not lost, the Area Secretary being none other than John Muston, and in February 2007, he was again appointed Area Commissioner.

To retreat further back than 1974 and the advent of Gwynedd County, Scouting recognised three separate counties: Caernarvonshire, Merioneth and Anglesey, each with its own administration. Caernarvonshire, originally one entity was in
1929 divided into two Scout Counties having a North and South Division each with its own County Commissioner. Until 1929 they seemed to have been considered Districts with District Commissioners while after 1929 they appear to have had County Commissioners and each a County status.

One momentous event for Gwynedd County was the visit of the UK Chief Scout, Sir William Gladstone in 1976. The following photograph captures the moment that George Cooper, DC of South Anglesey was presented with the Medal of Merit by the Chief Scout in the presence of several long serving Scouters.

![Photograph of Sir William Gladstone presenting the Medal of Merit to George Cooper, DC of South Anglesey.]

From left to right: Philip Butler, Dep. CC, Gwynedd; The Chief Scout; Chief Commissioner for Wales, Christopher Corey; George Cooper, DC South Anglesey; CC for Gwynedd, Ivor Wynn Jones and Dennis Eaton, DC North Anglesey. May 1976

Caernarvonshire

North and South Caernarvonshire were amalgamated in 1949. North Caernarfonshire had just lost its County Commissioner, Capt. H B Gould, who had taken over on the death of Mr W.N. Tipping in 1938. Norman Woodhead, ACC helped by Capt H W Kitchin, a former Sea Scout Commissioner who was Acting CC until Mr Hugh J. Jones, County Treasurer of North Caernarfonshire was appointed County Commissioner of the whole county in 1950, whereupon Mr Woodhead, a long serving Scouter seems to have disappeared from the scene.

At the first meeting following the merge (1949) it appears that Ian Tully was the County Secretary, a post he held for many years, (until 1967); Mr Ivor Owen
Dobinson had been appointed County Treasurer. The Rev. AJ Costain was the County Grants Officer. He was the Headmaster of Rydal School and had been associated with Scouting for many years having been invited to become Vice-President of Colwyn Bay Local Association in 1923 and appointed County Commissioner for West Denbighshire in 1929. The Field Commissioner for North Wales at this time was none other than John Sweet.

During the first meeting of Caernarvonshire County Scout Council on they named and delineated the boundaries of the Scout Districts:

1. Pwllheli. (Llyn South and West of a line from Clynnog Fawr to Afon Wen)
2. Porthmadog. (South of Clynnog Fawr to Rhod Ddu and West to Afon Wen)  
   * this was altered slightly at a later meeting but no details were given!
3. Caernarfon. (Clynnog Fawr to Portdinorwic (Felinheili), Llanrug to Waun Fawr and Rhod Ddu)
4. Eryri. (Llanberis, Nant Gwynant, Nant y Gwrhyd, Nant Llugwy, Bettws y Coed, Conway Valley north of Trefriw, Lledr Valley, Machno Valley)
5. Bangor. (Nant y Garth to Gorddinog to Ogwen cottage, south west to Pentir)
6. Penmaenmawr. (Gorddinog to Penmaenbach)
7. Conway (Penmaenbach to Deganwy, Llandudno Junction, north to Trefriw.
8. Llandudno. (Llandudno Borough with the exception of Penrhyn Bay.)

There were eight Scout Groups open in 1950/51: Llandudno, Betws y Coed, Pwllheli, Penmaenmawr, Conway, Bangor, Caernarfon and Llanberis. Successful Scout Troops were running in Pwllheli, Cricieth, Porthmadog, Caernarfon, Llanberis, Betws y Coed, Llandudno, Llandudno Junction, Penmaenmawr, Llanfairfechan and Bangor.

There were no DCs in Bangor and Penmaenmawr. Miss D.O. Parry, Assistant Commissioner for Wolf Cubs was decreed to represent the County Commissioner in Penmaenmawr and Mr David Jones being appointed ADC Bangor.

Later they became fewer Districts and with all mergers considered, the old county of Caernarvonshire (plus the bit added from the old West Denbighshire) is now composed of Conwy District and Gwynedd District.

The number of Groups have fallen since then and only Caernarfon, Porthmadog, Pwllheli, 7th City of Bangor and Bethesda (Beavers and Cubs) are now open.

Ian Tully reported that the number of Scouts in the county on March 1st 1952 was 646, an increase of 42 over the figure for 1951. During 1951 the county continued to be a popular host for visiting troops in camp and 1,671 Scouts from 80 different groups visited.

In 1952 the whole committee was up in arms at the loss to North Wales Scouting of John Sweet as their Field Commissioner. They put up a fight to retain his services, it had seemed in vain, then members were delighted to hear of Mr
Sweet’s return as Field Commissioner for Shropshire and North Wales. “Various members expressed their pleasure and on the motion of Capt Kitchin, seconded by Miss Parry and carried unanimously, the Secretary was asked to write to Mr Sweet to this effect.”

**Early Times**

When Scouting started, in common with everywhere else, our Area had quite a few troops springing up in 1908.

We have some evidence for early Troops in our Area. We have a record of all the Troops in existence in our present Area in 1913, from Roland Phillips’ papers; he was preparing to visit the Troops of Wales.

**Anglesey:**
- 1st Anglesey Troop (Beaumaris) SM R G Williams-Bulkeley. 32 Scouts
- 1st Newborough Troop. SM B. Jones. 23 Scouts
- 1st Llangedfan Troop. SM Miss Hester Armitstead. 19 Scouts
- 2nd Anglesey Troop (i.e. 1st Holyhead) SM W. Jas. Singleton. 12 Scouts. (1 King’s Scout)
- 1st Menai Bridge Troop. SM John Ellis Jones. ASM W. O. Williams, ASM Alfred D. Jones, 53 Scouts (1 King’s Scout)

**Conwy (i.e. West Denbighshire):**
- Abergele. SM F. Norman Clough. -
- 1st Colwyn Bay Troop. SM - ASM W. Hibbins. 12 Scouts
- 1st Llanrwst Troop SM Talbot Owen. 51 Scouts
- 1st Glanconwy Troop SM Francis R Perrin. 16 Scouts

**Conwy (i.e. Old Caernarvonshire):**
- 1st Llandudno Troop. SM George E Felton. 53 Scouts.
- 1st Caernarfon Troop. SM R.L. Jones. 18 Scouts.
- 1st Conway Troop. SM William George McMurray. 15 Scouts.
- 1st Cricieth Troop. SM John Ainsworth. 12 Scouts.
- 1st Porthmadog Troop. SM Thomas Owen Ackers. 42 Scouts.

North Caernarvonshire Lone Scouts: PL W G Barker, 9 Scouts (1 King’s Scout) (based in Llanfairfechan)

**Merioneth:**
- Artro Troop.(Llanbedr, near Harlech) SM Ellis Owen. 9 Scouts

Ffestiniog. SM J P Evans. 18 Scouts.

(Information from Carmarthen Archives, DSO4/16)

Since the Area is so large it would seem easier to deal with each former part in turn.
Conwy District

From Norman R. F. Tucker’s account of “Early Days in Colwyn District”.

The 1st Scout Troop in Colwyn Bay was formed in 1908 by Mr Samuel Johnston, the secretary of the YMCA and it was called the “Colwyn Bay and Colwyn” and had 5 patrols (owls, kangaroos, pewits, wolves and otters) Norman Tucker was one of the founder members and the local paper “The Welsh Coast Pioneer” recorded the names of the 5 patrol leaders as J. Hulme, R. T. Chaplin, C. Skelton, N. Tucker and F. T. Barker with corporals (later called seconders) E. Wild, J. Mills, A. Hulme, D. Davies with W. Hibbins as aide-de-camp and S. Johnstone as Scoutmaster. It also recorded one of their first meetings when they carried out a Tracking practice in which some 40 Scouts were involved. It was an encouraging start but during the next year numbers dwindled, and the Scoutmaster left, the same symptom is recorded in Holyhead, Anglesey.

The Troop was kept alive by a few enthusiasts, Norman Tucker, the “biggest boy” acted as unofficial leader. As numbers grew they linked up with the Llandudno Group with Scoutmaster A.E. Cooper. They marched over to Llandudno, went Scouting on the Orme or the West Shore and then marched back to Colwyn. Over time this proved too strenuous a routine.

Then Richard Macklin came to Colwyn Bay and formed a troop. Norman Tucker, at 16 became a warranted Assistant Scoutmaster. Then, in the Spring of 1910 the first Colwyn Bay Local Association was formed and Scouting in Colwyn Bay was officially established on approved lines. Most of the influential men in the town backed the Movement and were officially Vice-Presidents. Again this was a general trend.

The Chief Scout, Sir Robert Baden-Powell visited north Wales in May 1910. He visited Hawarden and Denbigh. The Colwyn Bay Troop attended a parade in the courtyard of Caernarfon Castle on May 3rd. Norman Tucker was in charge of the Colwyn Bay Section and the chief spoke to him. F.T.Barker, one of the original Patrol Leaders, who was by then “practically grown up” agreed to act as Colwyn Bay SM with Norman Tucker as his assistant and they revived the original troop.

In September 1910 the first meeting of the Denbighshire Boy Scout Council was held, although some unofficial organisation had existed in the county before. The President was the Lord Lieutenant (Col. Cornwallis West) and the county Commissioner was Col. (later Sir) Robert Watkin Williams-Wynn. The County was divided into 3 Districts each with its own District Commissioner. Wrexham (DC G. Fizhugh); Mid Denbighshire (DC Lt. Col. T. Ward and West Denbighshire (DC Col. S Sandbach) Colwyn Bay and Old Colwyn was one Local Association of West Denbighshire. At this time there were 380 Scouts in the county, Colwyn Bay with 53 Scouts had the largest number of any town. Llangollen was second with 44. However, in January 1911,
SM Barker resigned due to moving to Shrewsbury and Norman Tucker became Acting SM.

Later that month Mr Eric G S Walker of Headquarters came to Colwyn Bay and met the local Scouts and addressed a public meeting in order to improve morale and encourage development. Local teachers were invited. The local Scouts were joined by troops from Conwy and Abergale and 1st Llandudno sent their bugle band to lead the parade through the town. The Local Association President, Col. Cairns entertained 88 Scout to tea at Cartmel’s hotel.

During 1911 James Ellis was appointed Scoutmaster and Mr Tatton-Tatton became SM of the Dinglewood School Troop. For the Coronation of King George V, the local Scouts hauled a cartload of fuel up Bryn Euryn to help build the Coronation Bonfire.

Scouts also attended the Investiture at Caernarfon Castle. By July 6 Scouts had attained their 1st Class Badge, 3 the Second class Badge and a number of proficiency badges had been gained. They camped at Conwy that year.

A Headquarters was obtained and they attended a District Rally at Llanelian where they were inspected by the County Commissioner. However, later that year SM Ellis resigned and also Col. Cairns, who died the following year. Sir Frederick Smith (later Lord Colwyn) accepted the Presidency, an office he held until his death.

The Troop was fortunate to have an excellent ASM at this time. W. H. Hibbins was one of the original Scouts and had worked with Norman Tucker from the start. Due to an illness, Norman Tucker was forced to take some leave and Billy Hibbins carried on alone.

He took 8 Scouts to the first big jamboree at Perry Park, Birmingham. They purchased a trek cart in 1913 and used it to carry their kit. By November the Troop was reduced to 10 boys and there was a crisis when they disobeyed the SM and smoked cigarettes. Since ASM Hibbitt was leaving the town in December 1913, the Local Association, “after a little straight Talk” to the miscreants, disbanded the Troop. Scouting thus ended for a while in Colwyn Bay.

In May 1915, Mr J. Merddyn Rees started a troop in Old Colwyn and by November, Mrs Butterworth was approved as “Lady Scoutmaster of the Colwyn Bay Troop and worked conscientiously for the remainder of the war. They were inspected by Lord Baden-Powell in August along with the rest of West Denbighshire Scouts and were entertained to tea by their President.

The first Wolf cub Pack was formed at Rooftree School on 1st October 1916 with Mis K. M. B. Reece as “Cub mistress”.

**Later Scouting in Colwyn Bay**

After the first World War, Scouting lost ground and became dormant until, in 1922 a determined effort was made to revive the Movement. Norman Tucker
agreed to assist the Vicar, the Rev. Ewias Pryce to start the 1st Colwyn Bay Troop at St. Paul’s. It had a shaky start, lapsing in 1924. A troop was also started at Rhos Methodist which was joined by a patrol from Colwyn Bay Eagles. From this nucleus the 2nd Colwyn Bay troop was formed, at first a “controlled group” under St John’s Methodist church but later with SM F.T. Downes, “uncontrolled”.

The Local Association was revived in October 1923. By this time the county commissioner was Major A. E. Priddle, J.P. of Llanrwst who gave Norman Tucker all encouragement and absolute freedom. He was Secretary, Scoutmaster, DSM, ADC all at the same time! However, Scouting was on its feet again and they recruited more help. They invited the Rev. A.J.C. Costain, headmaster of Rydal, to become a Vice-President, thereby paving the way for a highly successful County Commissioner. The first Scout Troop at rydal started in 1925.

In the autumn of 1923 local troops paraded on the Promenade to welcome the Prince of Wales.

The record of the local troops in 1927 survives and shows how the Movement had grown:

1st Colwyn Bay. 3 Scouts. No SM
2nd Colwyn Bay 24 Scouts. SM Mr F. T. Downes
3rd Colwyn Bay (Nantyglyn) 10 Scouts. SM Mr W. W. Ratcliffe.
4th Colwyn Bay (Secondary School) 21 Scouts. SM Mr I. Cheer Roberts.
2nd Old Colwyn 6 Rovers, 36 Scouts. SM Mr J.W. Mayer
1st Llysfaen 17 Scouts, SM Mr L.E. Hunn.
1st Rydal 31 Scouts. SM Mr J.L. Hawking
3rd Rydal 31 Scouts SM Mr L. W. Turner
1st Rhos on Sea 3 Rover Scouts
1st Rhos on Sea and 3rd Colwyn Bay Wolf Cubs 22 Wolf Cubs

There were a total of 222 Scouts.
The County strength in 1927 was 17 Troops, 476 Scouts.

In 1928 the Chief Scout’s visit to Bangor drew many Scouts to Penrhyn Park and this was the year of the first County Rally and County Scout Council since the war. Twelve Troops were present at Rydal field for the Rally. The County Commissioner, Capt. (later Lt. Col.) J.C. Wynne-Edwards inspected the Scouts and presented a gold-plated statuette for the County Competition. (The Wynne-Edwards Trophy) This was won by 3rd Rydal.
The second county Rally was held in 1929 at Abergele. Eight troops entered. Mr. F. T. Downes was appointed to lead the local contingent to the Arrowe Park Jamboree. Also in that year, Rev. A.J.C. Costain was appointed County Commissioner.
In 1930 Mr Alfred Lynn became District Commissioner, a post he filled for 18 years. County Rallies continued, with the cub Packs also taking part. In 1932 Mr W.E.Graty was in charge of the arrangements. He was the new County Secretary.

In 1930 a novel experiment was tried when the “Border Scouts” was formed – this was an unofficial “get together” of Scouters from Denbighshire and Caernarvonshire. It made for lasting friendships.

In 1932 the Camp chief Mr. (Col.) J.S.Wilson visited the town as guest of the District Commissioner. This was on the occasion of his opening of the training camp at Rowen.

In 1935 the Scouts again hauled wood to the top of Bryn Euryrn to mark the Silver Jubilee of the coronation bonfire beacon of Kin George V.

In 1937 six Scouters and thirteen Scouts attended the International Jamboree in Holland. Mr. C. D. Yonge succeeded Mr Lynn as District Commissioner, a post he retained until his retirement from Rydal caused him to leave the District. For years, Miss A.K. Bird who had run her pack at the Froebelian school, did good work, first as District Commissioner for cubs and then as Assistant County Commissioner for Cubs.

With the war clouds gathering in 1938, many Scouters and senior boys left for the various services. Some Scouts joined the Cadets. However, a new influx of civil servants gave a new aspect to Scouting. Fortunately, some of them were Scouters and they took over the vacancies in the local troops and association. Some of these were Mr Weir, who acted as DC and L. A. Secretary, Mr Baker and Mr Stanley Hogg. The latter remained in the district after the war to give Colwyn Bay the benefit of his enthusiasm.

5th Colwyn Bay, 3rd Rhos on sea Scout Group

George Reeves, the present Chairman of 5th Colwyn Bay (3rd Rhos on Sea) Scout Group has been researching the history of this Group.

The Group was registered on 14th June 1937 as a Controlled Group, controlled by the Trustees of the Rhos-on-Sea Methodist Church. (Group reg. No 18705) Our address was “The Den” c/o the Methodist church, Rhos Road, Colwyn Bay. At the time of Registration there were 15 Scouts and 2 leaders, i.e. Frank Bradbury Scoutmaster and Herbert Hodkinson, ASM. They also showed our title, changed to 5th Colwyn Bay (3rd Rhos on Sea) on the 17th October, 1949 and on the 25th June 1951 we ceased to be associated with the Methodist church and became an “Open Group”.
In 2007 we celebrate our 70th birthday and that makes us a comparatively young group compared with some in the Conwy District whose roots go back to the start of Scouting; Even so it would be a mammoth task to record the contributions by all the Section Leaders who have served in the Group over the years. To start the ball rolling I decided to seek highlights from the past and concentrated on two pieces of memorabilia hanging in our hut, despite the rebuilds over the years.

Firstly we have a photograph of our Scoutmaster and some of our first Scouts taken in 1937, our year of registration. This was recently published in the “Pioneer” newspaper and this resulted in many contacts with ex-Scouts, some who became ASMs of that era and two Cub Mistresses of the World War II and post-war period when there was a rapid expansion of the Group. By 1941 the Scoutmaster had joined the Navy and one of the Senior Scouts, Ken Dibble, had been issued with a wartime ASM warrant in October 1941, when he was 18, and served as such until he was called up in August 1942 to serve in the RAF. Ken kept in touch with the Cub Mistress, Joan Spearing while in the RAF and they were married in 1947 and still live in the area today. Miss Spearing had been transferred to the area by one of the Ministries as had ASM L S Barker who ran the troop from 1942 onwards and was made SM in August 1944. He served until such time as Mr Frank Bradbury returned from Naval Service. At the same time, ex-PL J. L Davies, who has provided me with much information about the Group’s wartime activities was made ASM.

The Group’s members included evacuees, the children of Ministry officials, transferred to the area., 3 Dutch boys and a Belgian Jewish boy – the former no doubt from the many Dutch families who sailed into Britain via Holyhead and other ports when their country was overrun.

The size of the Troop can be gauged by the 50 Scouts L. S. Barker had in camp at Llanbedrgoch, near Red Wharf Bay, in Anglesey, 8 days in August 1944 when they had to put up with wartime rationing. No doubt he was supported by the Senior Scout Patrol formed in February 1944 and called the Gibraltar Patrol, all ex-PLs from the Troop.

Secondly, the Group possesses a notice board, headed 5th Colwyn Bay, and listing 19 Queen’s Scouts awarded between 1963 and 1982. Ten of these were awarded during the years 1972/3! This was certainly a period of Scouting excellence in our Heritage.

Also in the Headquarters there is a coloured poster and complimentary press release about two performances of a Gang Show put on by the Rhos Group on 3rd January 1945 in aid of Post-War Scout Funds.

During the post war period the Group also had a Sea Scout Patrol involved in boating activities. Miss Barbara Heaton, one of the early post-was Cub Mistresses provided photographs of the pack of that era. She was helped by her brother, one of the Scouts.
Impressed by the list of Queen’s Scouts, George Reeves opened up many sources of information by first of all trying to locate the whereabouts of Queen’s Scout Rowena Ann Littlewood (1982). He spoke to her father, Stan Littlewood who informed me that she is in the Transport Police at Waterloo Station, London, and that at one time he was GSL of the merged 5th/8th Colwyn Bay Scouts about 1956/55 and naturally, they arranged follow up discussions. The son of the present District Chairman, Len Gale, was a member of this Group and became a Queen’s Scout in 1975. Len Gale was District commissioner for some time and produced information and press cuttings for the 1970s. Hence information emerged about several leaders of the 5th who received Leader permits and one showing a group of Queen’s scouts from the “Pioneer” November 17th 1973 that included Len and Tony Dixon, Leader of the Rhos on Sea Group and Assistant County Commissioner for Venture Scouts, 1968 – 1978 and then about to move on as ACC Clwyd. In turn, with help Tony Dixon who is in contact with a number of these Queen’s Scouts the Group hopes to involve them in their 2007 plans. Len Gale took one group of Queen’s Scouts to Windsor.

Another line of enquiry enfolded when Mr and Mrs Dale whom George Reeves met at the Scout Fellowship, the parents of Ian Dale (Q. S. 1969) revealed that Betty Dale for a time ran 2 Cub Packs for 3rd Rhos and is preparing information about this and a Group Camp in Holland.

Thus the history of Rhos on Sea Scout Group is rapidly increasing in detail with information regarding different eras of our history.

The present long-serving Scout Leader, Geoff Powell provides the most recent history of the Group:

All meetings took place at the Methodist Hall, St. George’s Road until January 1996 when they moved to the new Headquarters which was opened by Sir William Gladstone on June 1st. In January 1997 the Group became part of Conwy district.

A last great fund-raising effort by the Executive Committee in December 1997 paid off the debts of the Group and the exec committee breathed a sigh of relief. After this the committee numbers fell and meetings became infrequent. A note, dated 9th March, 2006 and kept with the minutes adds, “We did not realise at the time but this was a mistake because parental involvement was reduced. Things have improved over the last couple of years and fundraising events are again being introduced. However, we still have difficulty in getting parents to attend Executive meetings.” These were heartfelt words of the SL

In January 1998 two Cub Scout Packs were formed and the Annual Troop Winter Night hike was started. In February 1999 the Group put on a Gang Show at the Methodist Hall to celebrate its 60th Birthday.
In September that year one of the Cub Scot Packs was closed due to lack of leaders and the Venture scout Unit was opened. The Group continues its good work with many and varied activities. In 2001 an “After School Club” was started; this ran until 2004. They have regular summer Camps and also enjoy Canal Boat Expeditions, completing the Cheshire Ring in 2005.

With the advent of Explorer Scouts the Din-Arth Unit was formed. This Unit which meets at Rhos HQ under the leadership of Kevin Williams has been most successful.

The latest Troop Summer Camp was held at Rowen where they combined basic Scouting with up to date activities. Fourteen scouts attended the camp and they had girls camping with them for the first time. Activities included forestry, navigation, camping skills, origami, first aid and various challenges. They had a “Ready Steady Cook” competition and a hike. The first object of the hike was to use their GPS to find a geocache. Geocaching is a world wide treasure hunt, there are lots of them in our area, “just google search geocache, enter your post code and a list of all the caches near you will come up” said Geoff! The one they found was called the Tiny Old Church. Thus they combined good old-fashioned Scout Camping with up to date activities!

The Troop continues to have exciting and challenging meetings such as bowling in Llandudno, a High Ropes Course at the Marl Outdoor Centre, a YHA Walking Weekend, and a weekend walking the North Wales coastal Path staying one night at Conwy Youth Hostel. The Group holds training meetings for leaders, helpers, patrol leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders and Parents’ Evenings which include Investitures, not to mention a Midnight hike and sleepover at the HQ in December 2006 as well as a Christmas Party – in Fancy dress. They have recently welcomed a new ASL, Lyn Hamilton Hunter.

An achievement in our Centenary Year is that two Rhos Sea Scouts, Scott Taylor and Angharad Meaby were selected by interview to represent the Scout Areas of Clwyd and Snowdonia and Anglesey at the Celebration Patrol Leaders Camp on Brownsea Island in July. Scott aged 13 and Angharad aged 12 will meet up with 250 other selected scouts from all over Britain to go back in time and camp in a similar fashion to Baden Powell's camp of 100 years ago.

**Llandudno**

Llandudno Local Association was formed in April 1910. The 1st Llandudno Scouts were formed by 1909 and “had a bugle band” by 1911. The Troop was closed soon after the outbreak of war in 1914. The 2nd Llandudno Scouts started sometime around 1924 when Miss Dorothy Thomas (later Mrs Cotgrave) decided her brother and his friends deserved a Scout Troop and the 1st Llandudno had not re-opened. Her brother, Frank Thomas, had been a Scout in the 1st Llandudno troop. Their younger brother, George, wanted to become a Scout and started as a Lone Scout, swotting up for his tests on his own. From time to time, a certain Mr Samuels came to test him. (This Mr Samuels from Llanfairfechan,
was none other than the former County Commissioner for Anglesey, Edward P. P. Samuels). Miss Thomas felt she could help her brother and make learning more interesting. Then his friends also wished to join in. And so, the 2\(^{nd}\) Llandudno Scout Troop (St. George's) was born with Dorothy Thomas as its first Scoutmaster. She was one of the earliest leaders in Wales to gain the Wood Badge and also represented the area at the first meeting of the Welsh Scout Council in Llandrindod Wells in 1925.

Later the 1\(^{st}\) Llandudno Scout Group was re-started and at various times over the next 50 years both experienced highs and lows. In 1974 both Scout Troops amalgamated but the Cub Packs remained separate, both feeding into the same troop. In 1985 the two Troops reverted to their former independence and the 1\(^{st}\) and 2\(^{nd}\) Llandudno existed again. The current Orme Scout Group was formed when both groups merged once more and this time created a new name for themselves. The 1\(^{st}\) Llandudno in the 1930s seem to have been Sea Scouts. Unfortunately, there do not seem to be any written records and all the information gathered is thanks to Brian Gregson taking notes and interviewing local people with knowledge of the Scouts. These included Mrs Pat Schilling, Frank Thomas’ daughter as well as his sister.

4\(^{th}\) Llandudno Scouts (St David’s Wesleyan Methodist church, Craig y Don) During the 1930s Mr Ivor Owen Dobinson was possibly the founding leader of the group, at the request of the church. When the Civil Service came to Llandudno during the World War II, a Scouter from London, a Mr Atwell, took over and there was a lady Akela as well. The information was given by I. O. Dobinson’s son, Eric, who also supplied the information that his younger brother, Roy, attended the World Jamboree at Moisson, France in 1947. Mr Dobinson was the Caernarvonshire County Treasurer from February 1950 until 1954.

1\(^{st}\) Conwy Troop BP Scouts (Later known as 1\(^{st}\) Conwy Scout Group.)

(From information sent by Ray Castle, CSL/GSL and Archivist.)

Early in 1910, a group of eight boys in the town read “Scouting for Boys” (probably in serial version in the newspapers). Inspired by Baden-Powell’s words, they decided to form a Scout Patrol. They met in a field just outside the town and in bad weather they met in the cellar under St Johns English Methodist Church, Rosehill Street, Conway. They persuaded Mr William Ralphes to assist them in ambulance and life-saving practices. Mr Ralphes in turn obtained the services of Mr Waterhouse of Cadnant Park to become the 1\(^{st}\) Scoutmaster.
One of the founding members of the Troop was Frank Ralphes - a significant name. In the first 60 years of Scouting in Conwy the names of two men were synonymous with the Scout Movement – B.P. and Frank Ralphes. Frank was Scouting in Conwy. (photographed on the occasion he received the Medal of Merit)

The Troop was active very quickly and had its first camp in Hendre in August 1910 with a well photographed first official camp in Aber in July 1911. By 1912, they had a Troop band of fifes, bugles and drums which not only led parades but participated in concerts.

In 1914, the Troop assisted the war effort by being orderlies and messengers for organisations such as the Red Cross and the Recruiting office. They also assisted in looking after refugees and guarding bridges. Frank Ralphes and probably other Troop members gained the Scout War Service Badge for his services to the country.

Frank joined the armed forces in 1916 and, after serving overseas he was demobbed in October 1919. Upon his return to Conway he re-joined the Troop and never left it.

Meanwhile the Troop was still thriving under Scoutmaster W.G. Mc Murray. He took over the Troop in 1912. Mr McMurray later became District Commissioner until he was succeeded by Frank Ralphes in 1942.

In 1915 Sir Robert Baden-Powell visited the large army training camp just outside Conwy on the Morfa. The Troop was inspected by BP and photographs which survive show some very proud Scouts.

In November 1918 the 1st Conwy Wolf Cub Pack was formed and its founder Cub Master was H. Russell Jones.
In 1920, Frank Ralphes attended the 1st World Jamboree in Olympia, London. He also attended Jamborees in Arrowe Park, Birkenhead in 1929, Holland in 1937, France in 1948 and the 1st Rover Moot in 1931 in Kandersteg, Switzerland.

Sometime between 1912 and 1921, the Group’s H.Q. moved to a wooden hut at the top of Mount Pleasant under the shadow of the town walls. The Group stayed there until the outbreak of World War 2 when the military requisitioned it.

One of the Group’s activities was semaphore and, between the wars they were the proud winners of the District competition shield on several occasions.

On 6th May, 1935, the Troop assisted in building and lighting a beacon on Conway Mountain to celebrate the Royal Silver Jubilee. Horses were used to carry the wood up the mountain and the beacon was lit by Major Douglas Porter. Earlier in the day a Thanksgiving Service had been held in the grounds of Conway Castle, attended by the Cubs and Scouts.

Throughout the depressed years between the wars the Cubs and Scouts of Conway were active in hiking, camping and all the other traditional aspects of Scouting. The archives of the Group are a little thin during these years, but do contain photographs of camps and parades.

One of the Scouts in the 1930s was Trevor Jones who became a King’s Scout. Trevor returned to the Troop as Assistant Scout Master under Frank Ralphes from 1948 – 1951. Perhaps it is an indication of the Group’s industry in the 1930s that we know they attended overseas Jamborees and were achieving awards as prestigious as the King’s Scout Award.

Whilst 1st Conway has a continuous record from 1910 to date it should be recorded that two other Scout Groups rose and fell in Conway. These were the 1st Gyffin Group for about 5 years in the early 1930s and the 2nd Conway Scout Troop which emerged during World War II, at St. Michael’s R.C. Church. Local knowledge indicates that this troop was largely made up of evacuees from English cities. It was formed in 1942 but there is no other information known about it.

After the war the 1st Conway had several bases, including the Town Hall (until it burnt down – no connection, I hope!) and a room under the Harbourmaster’s office on Conway Quay (which is still there)

In 1960 the Group received much press coverage on the occasion of its Golden Jubilee. There was a party at Deganwy Church House and a Thanksgiving and Re-dedication Service at St Mary’s Church, Conway, attended by over 200 Cubs, Scouts, Brownies and Guides. The service was also attended by four of the original founding Scouts, including District Commissioner, Frank O. Ralphes.
In 1966/67, after much hard work in raising funds, land on the edge of Morfa Bach car park was rented from Conway Town Council and a Scout Hut erected on the site. This hut is still in use in 2007.

Frank Ralphes took a back seat in running the Troop in the 1960s although he and his sister, Violet (who had been Akela from 1943 until 1969) appear in uniform on the Group photograph of the opening of the new hut on 13 May 1967.

In 1970, the Group celebrated its Diamond Jubilee, and to mark the occasion an inscribed bench was presented to the Borough of Conway. It was originally placed in the garden opposite Conway castle but now resides in Lancaster Square.

On 30th November 1972 the town of Conway ceased to exist and on 1 December 1972 “Conwy” came into being.

From the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s the Scout Troop was much influenced by Philip Williams-Jones. His background as an officer in the Royal Marines and current involvement with the Search and Rescue Dog Association meant that the boys had many exciting outdoor activities.

The most unusual of these activities was for the boys to hide on the slopes of Tal-y-Fan or the Rhinogs near Harlech and wait to be found by a very large and loud dog. The dogs never failed to find them!

In 1980 Ray Castle took over the Troop until 1987 when falling numbers in the Troop coincided with the Cub Pack losing its leader. And so the Troop was closed down and Ray became Akela. The pack thrived which indicates Ray made the correct decision.

There were two attempts to revive the Scout Troop in the 1990s but both failed.

The Colony feeds the Cub Pack still led by Ray Castle assisted by ACSLs Chris Williams and Susan Owen. The Pack has, on average, between 24 and 30 boys, who enjoy activities such as canoeing, camping, hiking, rock climbing, skiing etc every year. Of particular value is the rough ground behind the hut where campfire cooking skills are developed before the annual camp at Rowen Scout training camp – where it usually rains!

The Group has now come full circle as the Cubs meet in St John’s English Methodist Church – where they started in 1910, in winter and the Scout Hut in summer. The Beavers are based at St John’s all year round.

The 1st Conwy Scout Group has recently joined other incomplete Groups to form what is known as the Aberconwy Group. This means that when Conwy cubs reach Scout Age they move on to the Aberconwy Scout Troop who meet in Glancconwy. This informal arrangement works well due to the high standard of Scouting in that Scout Troop.
(The Aberconwy Scout Group came about in April 2002 when the Deganwy Scouts had no proper Headquarters and Glan Conwy Scouts were without leaders but had good premises. The cub Scouts of Conwy, Deganwy, Llandudno Junction and Glan Conwy now feed into the Scout Troop based in Glan Conwy headquarters. All these Sections are what remain of former Scout Groups that functioned in the mid 20\textsuperscript{th} century)

**Norman Tucker, (1894 – 1971) who became Honorary Commissioner for Wales.**

His early years of Scouting in Colwyn Bay have already been told. In 1924 he became the District Commissioner for Colwyn Bay until 1931 and also District Commissioner for Abergele and District, for part of this time. In 1927 he became ACC for Scouts in West Denbighshire and in 1932 he was appointed Deputy Camp Chief (Adult Leader Training) for North Wales. His efforts were recognised in 1932 when Lord Baden-Powell awarded him the Silver Wolf, on St George’s Day, at the age of 38.

**The Border Scouts. 1930 – 1939.**

This semi-official body of “Commissioners, Scouters, Cub masters and Rover Scouts from West Denbighshire and North Caernarfonshire, whose districts connected with the Conwy Valley were organised by Norman Tucker. They banded together for fellowship and the advancement of Scouting particularly through leader training. They were the core group that helped acquire and develop the Rowen Camp site for use by Scouts and were instrumental in the site becoming a recognised Adult Leader Training Centre (Wood Badge courses). When the first of these courses was run in 1932, the Rowen site was the only recognised training centre in North and Mid Wales. (The Llangefni Assistant Cubmaster Miss Dalton was the only woman who attended that course)

**Rowen Camp Site.**

The establishment, development and maintenance of Rowen Scout Training Camp in 1931 came about after Norman Tucker had been searching for a suitable site for some time. Then, Mr L. V. Turner (teacher and Scouter) at Rydal school suggested that Dr W.H. Tattershall of Glyn Isa, Rowen, in the Conwy Valley, might be able to help the Scouts find a campsite. On being approached the doctor offered the land free of charge as long as the property remained his. However, he eventually gifted the site to Conwy District Scouts and in 1980, this was confirmed and the site ownership vested in Trust with the Scout Association. The site was a jungle of brambles, nettles, rocks and rotting trees and it was many months before the dedicated team of “Border Scouts” were able to see the area now enjoyed.

Because of its use as a training ground for leaders, the site was visited by many senior people within the Scout Movement at that time. Baden-Powell himself wrote to the team expressing his appreciation of their work. The camp site
remains in use today and is managed by the Conwy District Scout Association. Their dedicated team continues to improve and develop facilities there.

“Wood Badge Training Course for Cubmasters”
Held at Ro Wen under the newly appointed Akela Leader for North Wales.
Rear Row: (left to right) A O Davies, Rhos on Sea; K Roberts, Colwyn Bay; N R F Tucker, (DCC) A H Willitt (Ak. L) C. Bulger, Llandudno; J D Newall, Conway; F O Ralpakes (Staff) E Dutton, Old Colwyn; D M Dunphy, (Staff);
Front Row: G Aldrich, Ruthin, G Roberts, Caernarvon; E Willitt, Llandudno; M Lloyd Jones, Caernarvon, D Parry, Ruthin; P Williams, Pwllheli.

In 1991, John Tucker, the son of the first Camp Chief, presented a photocopy of the Log Book of Rowen and last summer, 2006, when they celebrated the 75th anniversary of the site this was on show for all to view. It is now safely lodged in the Record Office in Caernarfon. For the 75th Anniversary, John Tucker visited, and presented Lord Roberts of Conwy, President of the Rowen Appeal Committee, with a framed copy of Baden-Powell’s letter, which is now on display in the Camp building. For the occasion the site was at its best reflecting the many hours of hard work put in by Ray Castle, Brian Gregson, John Barlow and their team. The anniversary cake was cut by Peter Walmsley, the “camp maintenance man” for many years. There was an atmosphere filled with wood smoke since younger members of the Movement were also there enjoying their weekend.
Scouting Honours Conwy District.
Silver Cross:
1926 Scoutmaster J A Hunter and Rover Scout C. Carpenter of the 1st Dolgarrog Troop
For their gallant conduct in connection with rescue work on the occasion of the bursting of the dam at Dolgarrog on December 2nd 1925. (The Group existed from c1920 to c1950)
Silver Cross
1934. Lionel Ryden, 1st Colwyn Bay (St. Paul’s) (12) saved a child from drowning.
Gilt Cross
1934. E. Greenfield and W. Denton (1st Rhos on Sea Scout Group) saved a woman bather from the sea.

Present Position in Conwy District.
1st Abergele (Beavers, Cubs and Scouts)
Old Colwyn (3rd Colwyn Bay) (Beavers, Cubs and Scouts)
1st Colwyn Bay. Beavers.
6th Colwyn Bay (Upper Colwyn) Cubs
5th Colwyn Bay (3rd Rhos on Sea) Beavers, Cubs and Scouts)
Llandudno (Orme Group) Beavers, Cubs and Scouts)
3rd Llandudno Junction. Cubs
Deganwy. Beavers.
1st Glan Conwy. Cubs
1st Conwy Cubs
Dinarth Explorer Unit. (Rhos on Sea)
Tudno Explorer Unit. (Llandudno)
Cornel Explorer Unit. (Crafnant)

Snowdon District (Yr Wyddfa) formerly Arfon District and now again re-named, Gwynedd District.

Scouting still thrives in Porthmadog and Caernarfon. It used to thrive in Pwllheli and is about to do so again. Cricieth was also a centre for Scouting at one time. Hopefully we will uncover more history of these Groups in the future. Caernarfon Group has a very long history.

Janice Brown, CSL 1st Caernarfon tells the story:
Scouting in Caernarfon started in January 1908. The first meetings were held in the County School under the Leadership of T Williams and Kendrick Evans. The group was registered in April of the same year.

Scouts soon became part of the local community when a fire totally destroyed Victoria Mills in 1912 and Scouts helped by keeping a water supply moving during the fire.

Wolf Cubs was started in 1924 and by this time there were two troops meeting in Caernarfon, one met in the Drill Hall and one in the Barracks.

During World War II the number of Scouts dropped due to the lack of warranted leaders. Many leaders and older Scouts left to join the war, many did not return.

Over the years many young men have left Scouting with the highest award of the King’s Scout and from the 1950s the Queen's Scout. A lot of work went into these badges, which shows the dedication of both the Scouts and their leaders.

There have been visits from the Chief Scout, Lord Rowallan, who presented Queen's Scouts awards to boys who had attained their badges.

Scouts from Caernarfon have helped many troops staying in the area. In 1958 and 1962 they helped disabled Scouts have an experience of camping in the Snowdonia area.

In the early 1960s the Caernarfon Group managed to purchase their own HQ. It has been well used over the years, not just as a meeting place, but also to provide somewhere to sleep for many a Scout from other areas.

Scouts have visited most areas of Britain and have also camped in Germany and Holland. Even the Cub Scouts have been to France to visit Disneyland.

In 1996 two Scouts, Carwyn Williams and Kevin Roberts, were awarded Chief Scout's Commendation for Meritorious Conduct after helping in the rescue of a collapsed fisherman on his boat at Victoria Dock, Caernarfon.

These days, 100 years after it was first began, Scouting is still going strong in Caernarfon. The uniform has changed and so have the leadership styles, but all sections are still taking part in all kinds of events and activities. They are doing
sponsored events, camps and taking part in community services, just like Scouts in 1908.

We celebrated our Centenary at Felin Fach, Caeathro,

Merioneth (Meirionnydd), a former Scout County then a District within Gwynedd, and later Snowdonia and Anglesey. Now part of Gwynedd District.

There does not seem to be much evidence of written records for this part of our Area. The present District Commissioner, Laurence Hooban and his wife, Ray gathered together everything they had and sent in photocopies.

Scouting here was concentrated around the main areas of population; Dolgellau, Tywyn, Barmouth (Abermaw), Harlech, Aberdovey (Aberdyfi) and sometimes at Fairbourne. They seemed to have quite a few District Commissioners and camp visiting was indeed a busy occupation for all of these during the summer.

A few personalities emerge from the letters and minutes preserved:

In 1956, Captain Fuller from the Outward Bound Sea School (OBSS) at Aberdyfi was described as ACC. Later he is referred to as the County Commissioner.

James Fisher was the SM of the large Dyfi Sea Scout Troop. He had no help and limited time. It appears that neither the CC nor the officials of Aberdyfi Group were inclined to aid him and to add insult to injury, the CC who actually covered one meeting for him suggested that the boys have a summer camp! The troop had been in being since 1954 and was still getting recruits. Many of the Cubs were looking forward to joining the troop. Later in the same month, he wrote again and telling the CC that he has had the boat “Marry Morgan” broken up by the boys and removed from the beach, because it was in a bad condition and required a lot of repair. Also, that the survey required by Scout Law had not been carried out. He had told the Chairman that had any accident occurred to any of the boys whilst out in the “Marry Morgan” it would be the Scoutmaster who would be held responsible by the parents etc! The Scout Hut, situated at Penrhos, had been occupied by the Drama Society for some time. The society was then in the progress of removing their equipment and when this had been done it was intended that the boys would carry out the small repairs required and whitewash the inside and perhaps at a later date paint the outside. This hut he deemed suitable for activities during the winter as it was possible to heat it. The big shed which had been “so kindly lent by the OBSS” was ideal in summer but very cold in winter and, in any case, room in it was now sparse owing to the storage of OBSS gear and boats. He insisted that it was now vital that someone was found immediately to take over the ordinary running of the Troop or within a very short time there would be no Troop. The average age of the boys was between 13 – 15 years. The Cub Pack was run by Mr Williams, Barclays Bank, and the GSM was the Vicar, the Rev. Francis. The Troop closed.

After all this, James Fisher agreed to become County Secretary!
By 1959 Capt. Fuller was decidedly the County Commissioner, probably newly appointed in view of the contents of the meeting called in December. At this meeting they discussed re-forming the County Scout Council as they felt the present administration was not adequate. They decided to suspend the Local Associations and to form an Executive Committee formed from the County Scout Council to act as Local Association for the whole county.

The council was to consist of the County Commissioner, County Secretary, County Treasurer, All District Commissioners, All Group Scoutmasters and others as suggested by the groups. It was suggested that Dr J. Marshall Lloyd and Mr D.B. James of Tywyn and Mr B.J. Williams of Bala be invited to join, which they subsequently agreed to do. Mr James Fisher of Aberdovey was appointed County Secretary in place of Mr W. Glyn Jones (leaving the area). The County Commissioner was to contact Mr Evans of Dolgellau regarding continuing as treasurer. It was decided to appoint a District Commissioner for the Tywyn /Aberdyfi area; and to invite Mr R .V. Peckham of Harlech to be District Commissioner for the Harlech district. Mr W. S. Salter, Chief Fire Officer for Merioneth agreed to take the role in the Dolgellau district.

The County Commissioner was to find an appropriate person for County President and to investigate the letter from IHQ saying no contributions had been paid since 1954! Subsequently, the County Treasurer, J T Evans agreed to continue in post and sent a cheque to IHQ.

Harlech Group asked if they could appoint a Badge Secretary for that area. Mr J (or D) Roberts was Badge Sec. for Tywyn. The only groups functioning at that time were Harlech and Tywyn – “as far as the meeting was aware!”

At Harlech, Mr D Doughty was the GSM, he was also listed as SM; Mr Jeffries Jones, Mr S. Davies, Mr Calvert and Mr Kennard were ASMs. It was a Sea Scout Group.

At Tywyn, Mr O Roberts was GSM and there was a Troop and a Pack. At Barmouth (Abermaw) Dr James May was the DC and Miss Basterfield was the CM. There was no troop.

Mr B J Williams Bala was attempting to recruit in that area.

The County Commissioner stressed the need for more troops, Barmouth in particular had a great deal of equipment. With a suitable SM the troop could be re-formed.

Mr Jeffries Jones said there was opposition in parts of the county about an “English” organisation. He wanted literature in Welsh as he felt they would then get more support from teachers. He suggested that the County Secretary wrote to Lord Kenyon. This was done and the reply came quickly explaining that Scouting for Boys had already been translated into Welsh; it was too expensive to re-publish and sent him a copy. He also told them there were no difficulties in taking the Promise and learning the Law in Welsh. Later, the Secretary of the
Welsh Scout Council sent them some copies of the Welsh version of Scouting for Boys. They later received copies of the Promise and Law in Welsh.

In May, 1960 they held a meeting in Barmouth. By then Mr Lancaster, an Instructor at the OBSS, with a long experience of Scouting elsewhere, had been appointed DC of the Tywyn/Aberdyfi district and Mr Westley was introduced as the Harlech CM. Mr Doughty reported that Harlech was in a strong position despite the fact that Mr Kennard had left the district. They still had a scoutmaster, 2 assistant scoutmasters and apart from Mr Westley, another Cubmaster had promised to help.

There were 19 scouts and 16 cubs in Harlech at the end of 1960. Tywyn Group continued to flourish under the care of GSM O. Roberts, and had about 17 Scouts and the same number of cubs. This December meeting was poorly attended – this was blamed on the International rugby match and the poor weather. Miss Basterfield in Barmouth still had a good Cub Pack but the troop was still dormant. All Scout equipment with the exception of 1 tent has now been returned to the Barmouth Group ready for the next troop.

The following year, 1961 owing to various difficulties, no committee meetings were held. CC Captain Fuller regretfully had to resign and Col. Griffiths Eyton was appointed CC..

In September 1963, James May (Jimmie) wrote to James Fisher (Jim) (Co. Sec.) resigning as DC Barmouth as he was leaving the county. He had served 15 years with Barmouth (from 1948) He had been in Scouting ever since he joined the Wolf Cubs. They had been 15 stormy years with Barmouth! They had had Troops and no Troops, had Scouters and some they would have been better off without! They had the famous Gang Shows and, ever since, he had feared getting involved with another one! He thought it a good time to go because he felt Scouting in Barmouth was secure then with Glyn and John, (no surnames given) and the boat, the campsite and the committee. He felt the Troop was underway.

In 1964, James Fisher wrote to welcome Mr A R Hewison, Warden of the Ockenden Venture, Barmouth, enclosing his warrant as Barmouth DC. He also sent a campsite list and camp inspection forms were explained.

In 1965, Miss M. Basterfield, CM 1st Barmouth was awarded the Long Service Decoration.

In May 1968, Mr R H Law of Dolgellau was appointed Assistant County Commissioner and Mr R W Hughes was county treasurer. However, at the same time James Fisher resigned as County Secretary (after over 10 years in post) Major Seymour Thomas, Commissioner for North Wales wrote to Mr R. H. Law– “You will have an arduous job to get the county back on its feet again as they have been without leadership for so long”.

He also wrote to HQ asking that all correspondence be sent direct to Mr Law until a secretary was appointed.
In December 1968, at Fairbourne Scout Headquarters, a meeting chaired by Major Seymour Thomas was called. Camp visiting was discussed; 131 Troops had visited in 1968. The Fairbourne Commissioner had visited 51 of them. Maj. Seymour Thomas thought the county should be divided into Districts winding up the many Local Associations and have a County Committee to do their work. (Again!) He regretted the low number of Scouts in Meirionnydd and recommended more active Group Committees and a strong County committee. Mr Law supported this – Scouts in Barmouth, Dolgellau and Bala needed more help. Again there was low attendance at the meeting.

Dennis A Noble, who seems to have become the County Commissioner by then, was to see what could be done about Leader Training. The Major said he preferred leaders who had been fully trained but they could start from scratch and acquire knowledge as they progressed!

In 1969, R. H. Snow of Dolgellau was appointed County Treasurer and Fairbourne Scouts ran out of boys! A Venture Unit was started with the ones who remained and they claimed there were enough 11 year olds to re-start the Troop in the near future.

In 1970 the Bala cubs had re-started, Tywyn cubs were doing well and together the Guides and Scouts had bought the hut they were renting from the council. Also in 1970, the Drill Hall, in Dolgellau where the cubs met had been closed for repairs. And the County Commissioner determined to visit Jennie Morgan the CM and her Cubs.

Jenny Morgan carried on with the Pack, making other arrangements until the Drill Hall was once more available.

Furthermore in 1970, Fairbourne Cubs had lost their CSL. Francis Harris the GSL took them on.

1970 seems to be an eventful year for Merioneth for in May, Dennis Noble wrote to Major Thomas about a crisis regarding Barmouth Cubs. The Cub Scout Pack had been run by CM Miss Basterfield for about 20 years. She turned it into a Boys' Club after a visit by a Mr Morris who criticised the way she ran the pack. The Rector and the Barmouth Group committee backed Miss Basterfield. Mr Noble was anxious not to lose the old established Pack, but he had been informed that Miss B. would under no circumstances work under Mr Morris (his Scouting connection was not revealed)

One Cub Pack was lost when 22 LAA Regiment moved to Germany.

In 1971 there was a little good news, R. H. Law ACC, was told that a Miss Marianne Frances Goodborn had moved to Aberdyfi. She had been ACM with a Birmingham group for 12 years.

In October 1972 the beleaguered County Commissioner was asked by Headquarters to provide Scouting for Scouts among the Ugandan Asians residing in Resettlement Camps in the county. By this time there was only one Scout Troop in the whole county – in Dolgellau. However, in the same letter, he mentioned a troop in Fairbourne!
A letter arrived about the next North Wales Scouters’ Conference in March 1973, asking how many leaders from Merioneth were going to attend. The CC thought it was really a query about how many leaders had left and joined since the previous Census so that the correct people could be contacted.

By this time, the County Commissioner’s wife, Mrs Audrey Noble was County Camping Secretary and was dealing with many bookings.

In 1974, Merioneth County became a District within the new County of Gwynedd and Dennis Noble became District Commissioner until his retirement when Gwyn Williams was appointed.

In 1977 the following Groups were registered: Tywyn (Morfa), Barmouth (St Johns), 1st Bala and 1st Dolgellau.

In 1979, they registered: 1st Blaenau Ffestiniog, 1st Tywyn (Morfa), 1st Barmouth (St Johns) and 1st Bala.

In 1980, 1st Tywyn, Barmouth (St. John’s), 1st Bala, 1st Dolgellau and Harlech.

In 1982, 1st Barmouth (St Johns), 1st Bala, 1st Tywyn (Morfa), 1st Dolgellau, 1st Harlech and 1st Llanbedr.

In the early 1990s Merioneth District took part in County and District events – especially Orienteering at which they excel. In 1993, they held a District Camp which included such events as archery, pistol/rifle shooting, orienteering, canoeing, cycling and a mine visit. Tywyn Scouts had a mountain biking weekend using the Youth Hostel near Dolgellau as their overnight stop. Harlech Scout Group raised £700 towards the purchase of their own HQ by means of a sponsored walk. This was a tremendous effort.

During that year all four Cub Packs made the visit to the Welsh Cub Fun Day at Builth Wells and had a thoroughly enjoyable time. They also held a District Cub Camp at Harlech that summer. In fact they have these activities regularly.

In 1996, the Cambrian News reported the news that Harlech Group were celebrating their 80th anniversary on November 16th. On this occasion Michael Orton, District Secretary was presented with the Long Service Award. He had held various posts within Meirionnydd, particularly with Harlech Group before becoming District Secretary, the job he still does to date.

In 1999, DC Laurence Hooban presented ADC Bill Rackstraw with a certificate for 25 years Scouting and Matt and Daniel O’Keefe, of Tywyn Scouts showed a slide show of their time at the World Jamboree in Chile at the Area AGM in Harlech. To crown the year, Elfyn Llwyd MP officially opened the new extension to the HQ at Harlech.

At present there are still Scout Groups in Harlech and Tywyn, but Dolgellau is closed and Aberdfi has been extinct for quite a while.
Anglesey (Ynys Môn)

Anglesey, being an Island, had fewer geographical problems, than Merioneth or Caernarvonshire. Holyhead Local Association formed a district in the North West, while a sort of district existed in the South East based on Beaumaris, Penmon, Llangoed and Menai Bridge, with Amlwch in the north east loosely linked with Holyhead and Llangefni isolated and most of the time a Lone Troop/Group in the centre.

During the 1950s Anglesey was divided into 4 districts for a short time but eventually became two, North Anglesey and South Anglesey with the line of demarcation passing from the north east to the south west slightly above Llangefni bringing that area into South Anglesey. George Cooper was DC of South Anglesey until 1979. He was followed by Ann Dean, Frank Marshall and George O’Dell. Dennis Eaton, followed Gwilym Robinson in North Anglesey.

Early Times in Anglesey

We have on record, Frank Bell’s account of the beginning of Scouting in Holyhead, Anglesey. In May 1909, a meeting was called of interested persons in the town of Holyhead and a Local Association was formed, “and Boy Scouts were born in Holyhead, and have lived here ever since (although on one or two occasions they have nearly died!”

The story continues: “notices were posted about the town inviting boys who were anxious to join the Movement to turn up at the Park School playground on May 26th 1909. They did turn up right enough, 120 of them and umpteen Scoutmasters.

In those days the Scout Promise was made when you first joined the Scouts and you can imagine how tired the Chairman, Colonel Pilkington was after he had finished administering the oath. Even at this parade one boy was in full uniform.”

He was the first uniformed boy seen by Frank Bell. The boys were arranged in patrols and Scoutmasters allotted to take charge of them. The fervour did not last and both boys and scoutmasters dropped out and only the Wolf Patrol, led by John Fox Russell was left – “composed of the best Scouts at the time, they did meet fairly regularly and even went for Patrol Camps. The remnants of the other patrols had to do the best they could.”

The War Record of this Wolf Patrol is evidence of their calibre and Holyhead is proud of them to this day:
The 1st Wolf Patrol consisted of:
**Patrol Leader John Fox Russell**, VC, MC. He was killed in Palestine in 1918, and is buried at Beersheba. He was a Captain in the RAMC and had trained as a doctor.

**William Fox-Russell**, afterwards Capt. He visited Holyhead Scouts after the war and took his brother’s medals to show to them.

**Henry Thornbury Fox Russell**, Royal Welch Fusiliers (Lieutenant) then RWF (Captain) He was awarded the Victory and War Medals as well as the 1914-15 star with the RWF and served in northern France. MC

**Robin M. W. Jones**, afterwards Major, MC

**Ivan Sorge**, afterwards Lieutenant. He was killed and is buried at Etretat, France

**John Tanner**, afterwards Lieutenant, RFA

**William Tanner**, afterwards Lieutenant, RNR

(Not in the Photograph)**Cecil Edwards, later the PL and then ASM**, served with the Royal Engineers in Northern France as a signaller in the Royal Welch Fusiliers. He was awarded the Military Medal for repairing equipment when under fire, in 1916. When he returned to Holyhead he took up the duties of ASM again and later was a member of the LA.
Another Scout, Richard Jones, lost his life during the war in the Clan McNaughton which foundered off the Irish Coast. (Feb 3rd 1915), and Mr Singleton (former SM) in 1918 in the sinking of the RMS Leinster. Again this kind of story could be repeated across our Area.

Beaumaris Scouts were started by Captain Richard Williams-Bulkeley, (son of the Lord Lieutenant) soon after the formation of the Holyhead Troop. However, this Troop was registered first at Headquarters and became known as 1st Anglesey to the chagrin of Holyhead who then became 2nd Anglesey. They soon decided to be known as 1st Holyhead but Beaumaris remained 1st Anglesey until the 1920s. This was a very strong Troop for many years although Holyhead, and later Menai Bridge seemed to retain their Rovers better. Those from Beaumaris tended to leave the area earlier although a later Scoutmaster in Holyhead was heard to say that they trained boys up to the point of becoming useful so that they could join the Navy or the Merchant Service.

Evidently Scouting began early in Bangor (then in Caernarvonshire) also, as on July 8th 1909, the Bangor Scoutmaster and the Troop visited Llangefni in Anglesey to attempt to give them the impetus to begin Scouting. Their demonstration of activities was given at the “Drill Hall”, formerly Capel Dinas (now Ivor Jones’ Ford Garage) only a field away from where the present Scout Hut is situated. Community leaders were invited to this meeting with a view to founding a Troop at Llangefni in addition to those already formed at Holyhead and Beaumaris. Following a second visit from the Bangor Troop, a Troop was set up in Llangefni, a concert was given to raise money for uniforms and Walter J. Jones, a teacher at the Council School who hailed from Ffestiniog as their Scout Master.

After an encouraging start, enthusiasm waned and numbers dwindled as they had in Colwyn Bay. It was probably a general trend, for in 1910, Baden-Powell went on a tour promoting Scouting. Having visited Hawarden and Denbigh he then went on to Caernarvon where Norman Tucker met him. He also visited Bangor that day (May 3rd) and was a guest of Sir Richard Williams-Bulkeley, Lord Lieutenant of Anglesey, at Baron Hill that night. B.P. visited the Beaumaris Troop on the morning of May 4th and was then driven to Llangefni with the Lord Lieutenant and others. Crowds lined the flag bedecked streets of Llangefni to cheer B.P. when he arrived at the Town Hall. The Town Band formed in the shadow of the clock and led the parade up Bridge Street to the Drill Hall.

Once inside, the boys from the Llangefni Troop were “speechified” by many of the important gentlemen accompanying BP, as well, of course, as Baden Powell himself.

After the pontificating had ceased, the procession reformed down Bridge Street and Baden Powell and the Lord Lieutenant were chauffeured away to Holyhead in style.
In Holyhead, things had been developing a little, to go on in Frank Bell’s words: “and as a result that when the Chief Scout, Sir Robert Baden-Powell, inspected the Troop in the Market Hall on May 4th it was under the charge of two Scoutmasters. The Wolf Patrol, now led by Cecil Edwards, gave an ambulance display at this concert, for which they had been trained by the SMs. After the Chief’s visit, it was decided to form two Troops SM Singleton in charge of the first with Mr Griffith as his assistant and SM Hall in charge of the second with Mr Frank Bell as his assistant. However, the troops invariably paraded together! Mr Hall left in 1911 and Mr Singleton in 1913.

Returning to Frank Bell’s account of the development of Scouting in Holyhead: “About the summer of the year 1909, one of the Scouts (Neville Riley) rescued a boy from drowning on the beach and on the case being brought to the notice of the Chief Scout, Neville was awarded the Silver Cross for saving life. In 1926, Rover Scout John Scarfe of Holyhead was also awarded the Silver Cross for his attempt to rescue someone from drowning.

By 1913, SM Bell and Cecil Edwards (now ASM) were the only Scoutmasters still in post: responsible for “carrying on”. The Local Association had long ago ceased to exist and those in charge of the boys had to do just as they thought best. Col. Pilkington had left the town and the secretary had resigned. “The only officials in the place were Mr A T Orr, the County Secretary and Mr Frank Edwards, the local Secretary. In the early part of 1916 Mr Orr tried to reform the Local Association, but it held just the one meeting and then died a natural death and things were left entirely to the officer in charge again to do all the work. It may be mentioned that it was at this meeting that the present SM was granted his warrant although he had acted in that position for years!” This again is a story repeated in many places.

Keeping the Movement alive in Holyhead was entirely done by the encouragement that came from the boys’ relatives and friends according to Frank Bell. The Movement justified its existence in Holyhead and elsewhere as proven by its record in the Great War. Holyhead Scouts are mentioned in the book, “Holyhead & the Great War.” It is a record to be proud of and was repeated by Scouts everywhere. The battalions stationed in Ireland passed through Holyhead on their way to France and the Scouts met the troopships and served out tea and drinking water to the soldiers. In the early days, when the work was heaviest, they were at the railway station day and night. At first they had to carry the water in large baths borrowed from a hotel; later they were provided with water tanks! Later tasks included helping the Red Cross with disinfecting the Holborn Hall at which they were very efficient. Subsequently, with the scarcity of paper, the Troop, in common with many others, collected waste paper. They sold this and supported many charities including the St Dunstan’s hospital for Blinded soldiers with the money they made.
In those days the Holyhead troop was known as 2nd Anglesey. The Beaumaris troop was known as 1st Anglesey for several years not because they were the 1st Scout Troop to be raised in the County but because they had registered at Headquarters before Holyhead! This was an early bone of contention until Beaumaris re-named themselves the 1st Beaumaris Scout Group a little while later. It became dormant during the war, like 1st Llandudno, possibly because its leaders were called up. Holyhead was in a slightly better position, although Cecil Edwards joined the Army in 1914, there were others who were not called up until later and the port had to be kept running.

In Holyhead, Malcolm Riley became ASM of the Troop in April 1917. Both he and Frank Bell were to leave for France soon afterwards and for the rest of the War the boys found themselves without officers but without any fuss they kept the old flag flying until all had been demobilised.

No records of Anglesey Scout Council exist for the period between 1907 and 1920 – this was stated by Capt. Riley at the 1920 Annual Meeting. Fortunately, because they decided to publish a magazine and the leaders of that time occasionally published some little “histories” of their group some of the lost information has been retrieved. Holyhead, in particular have a rich archive. Frank Bell, helped by his ASM Malcolm Riley and the Patrol Leaders kept a detailed Court of Honour Log from 1916 until 1921 which also provides much detail of the Troop during those years. This includes an account of their visit to the Jamboree in London when they camped in the Old Deer Park, Richmond. SM, ASM and 28 Scouts went.

Frank Bell was responsible for starting the first Wolf Cub Pack, in Holyhead. The first Cubmaster was Mr Richard J. Williams and he kept a log from 1916 until 1921. He carved the Totem Pole that was used as the trophy for the Wolf Cub Rallies also held in Anglesey in those times, sometimes apart from the Scout Rallies and sometimes during the same weekend. While The SM and ASM were at the front the Scouts camped with the Wolf Cubs and CM Williams; accounts of these also survive. This first Pack was named “Bell’s Own”. For some reason, in 1921, Mr Williams left the pack and started his own in the town. Since there were only a few Wolf Cubs left in the “Bell’s Own” Pack, Frank Bell asked Mr Williams to take them with him, which he did. The Wolf Cubs then paraded separately to the Scout Troop until the Groups were formed in 1927.

At the 1920 meeting, the Chairman asked the County Commissioner to indicate the strength of the Movement in the County:
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<th>Location</th>
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<th>Officers</th>
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<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Land Scouts</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wolf Cubs</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Land Scouts</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Llandegfan</td>
<td>Wolf Cubs</td>
<td>8</td>
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1st Holyhead (Land Scouts) 1920
In 1920 a Troop of Sea Scouts was also in being in Holyhead but was short lived due to a lack of leaders:

Menai Bridge, so strong in 1913 were completely dormant at this time, although they did revive later on.

All present agreed with the Commissioner when he said that “the greatest difficulty we have is the obtaining of Scoutmasters. Yet it is not to be wondered at – a Scoutmaster’s job is not all honey by a long chalk – though it must be confessed he has his reward.”

The County Commissioner was Edward P. P. Samuels who lived in Llanfairfechan but he did have a car! He was an active and hard working Scouter who visited all the camps which were held on the island – be they Anglesey Scouts or strangers. In 1922, he appointed an Assistant Commissioner, Charles V. Taylor, who went to Gilwell and completed the Wood Badge course by September of that year. Mr Samuels resigned in 1923, but accepted the post of Honorary Commissioner. C. V. Taylor became County Commissioner and served or 27 years until 1950. Sir Arundel Neave was the next one but he only attended one County Meeting at which he promised to do more but by the next year he had left for Ireland. In 1955, Iori Wynn Jones took
things over and was County Commissioner over the period when Anglesey became part of Gwynedd.

The Anglesey Scout Magazine. (Mônings)

In 1921, Anglesey Scout County decided to start a magazine. It was produced quarterly, and continued in publication until 1938, going through periods of despondency when the County Scout Council debated discontinuing it because of the expense and/or the apathy of the Scout Groups and periods of enthusiasm with articles rolling in and being popular with the Scouts! There were fewer of the latter – the Editor pleads in one issue “This is YOUR magazine, what have YOU done for it!” It is now a valuable archive of the time, bringing to life those Scouters of long ago and giving details one can never capture from reading the minutes of various committees. Despite beginning in 1921, a year after the earliest existing County Scout Committee Minutes, there are retrospective accounts of the various Scout Troops and Cub Packs giving their early history and also references to “old Scouts” and their careers. It was christened Mônings (after Môn – the Welsh name of Anglesey) by the first editor Malcolm Riley. This was not universally popular – Mr Samuels, thought “The County Scout” was a better title! Following a slight disagreement about the 1922 Rally, T. G. Walker, the Amlwch scoutmaster felt that “The Cybi Growler” would be a more apt title for the magazine. (Malcolm Riley was from Holyhead (Caergybi)) He had intimated (quite gently) that he thought Amlwch’s victory in the Rally was due to favouritism by CC. This was compounded by the Judges apparently losing the marks for the competitions!

Amlwch Scouts of that time were experts at signalling and a photograph exists of their team who won the All Wales Morgan Semaphore Shield 1921 or 1922. Since there are two shield in the photograph, this must have been the same year as they won the County Shield.
Both Mr Samuels and Mr Taylor wrote little sermons for the magazine. They were great ones for correct uniforms and keeping to the rules. In one issue, Mr Samuels brings up the IHQ Rules. He is concerned mostly about the wearing of correct uniform outside camp limits. This is because “some fellows wear all sorts of jazz pullovers and weird head coverings”. He added: “It was said at one recent County committee meeting that a lady Cubmaster was frequently seen in the road outside her camp with her hair in curl papers!” Another one of his pet hates was “Scouts with rolled down sleeves”.

The first publisher was Aldyth M. Langdon, of Henblas, Bodorgan, who was the first ACC Wolf Cubs. She also helped with the Troop and Pack in Llangefni and took the Scouts to a camp with the Beaumaris Scouts. She rather mysteriously disappeared from the scene in 1922 leaving an address of a hotel in Italy. When the first editor, Malcolm Riley also resigned, Mr and Mrs von der Heyde of Beaumaris took over as co-editors and Mrs von der Heyde (formerly Margaret Hester Armistead who was the 1st SM of Llandegfan and transferred to Beaumaris as ASM and later SM) remained editor until the magazine folded.
Mönings records the departure and arrivals of leaders and administrators, on the happenings in the various Troops and Packs and of course, in great detail about the Annual Rally. They lost their county secretary/treasurer in 1925 when Captain Riley retired and left to live near London. His son, Ronald Riley, took over his father’s posts and continued to serve until 1937. The Spring issue of Mönings, celebrates Ronald Riley’s appointment as Assistant County Commissioner, but, alas, he gets a promotion away from Holyhead and the next issue marks the departure of ACC, County Secretary and Treasurer!

Fortunately, one of the Rovers of Holyhead, Alex McLeod, was back in the town having obtained a teaching post at Holyhead School, so they find another County Secretary/Treasurer quickly. A few years later Mr Macleod left for Birkenhead and later for Johannesburg. He returned for a reunion in Holyhead 26 years later, which is recorded in the local newspaper. Losing personnel was a constant source of problems for the early Scout Groups just as it is today. Haydn Richards, who took over as RSL, GSM and later DC in Holyhead when Frank Bell moved on, bewails the fact that “they train Scouts up until they are Rovers only to lose them to the Navy or Merchant Service just as they become useful as leaders!”

Even Scouts from Llangefni became seamen. John King, once their Troop Leader in the early years, the only Scout in the Troop to gain the 1st Class Badge, became a merchant seaman. On July 6th, 1921, in the offices of the Mercantile Marine Service Association in Liverpool, Capt. C.H. Kelston, Vice President, presented, on behalf of the Royal Humane Society, its honorary testimonial to John H. King who, while serving as an apprentice on the Prince Liner “Gaelic Princess” rescued the 5th Engineer, Gerald Hall, who was in imminent danger of losing his life. Mr Hall had been bathing in Hong Kong Harbour when he was swept under a barge. King jumped overboard from his steamer and released Hall from his precarious position and held him up until assistance came. Hall could not swim and was wearing a life belt when he was swept under the barge. As the report says “the rescue was a very meritorious one”.

The magazine reported on visits to the Prince of Wales rally (1922), Summer Camps, Weddings (e.g. Miss Hester Armitstead ASM Beaumaris and founder of Llandegfan Troop, to John Bennett von der Heyde, Local Association Secretary of Beaumaris from its inception, in 1922, and later Frank Bell to Florence Nicholls in 1924) Obituaries both to leaders, parents, Scouts and Guides were included, also. The Annual Meeting of the Scout Council was always reported and stories were included frequently – usually when the Editor had no contributions from the Troops and Packs. An event worthy of mention is the Jamboree at Arrowe Park in 1929 when 92 Anglesey Scouts camped at Upton Park, away from the mud of the Jamboree proper and gave a spirited pageant about Caractacus and his Celt friend and the battle between the Romans and the Druids. The costumes are described in detail and the cast named. The producer was the Llangefni Scoutmaster, Robert J.O. Williams, who hardly ever seems to have Scouts who
can either take part in the Rally or go to camp but plods on regardless, without the backing of a Local Association. The pageant was also performed in Beaumaris Castle and at the Penrhyd Park Rally with Caernarvonshire later.

They held yearly Rallies at Whitsun, from 1920 until 1938. Each year one of the Local Associations would offer to host the Rally. One was planned for 1939 but there was no magazine to report it and the Annual meeting of the County was also cancelled that year. They were either weekend Rallies with the host Group finding “billets” for the visiting Scouts or one day Rallies when things became too difficult. It was usually the holding of the Anglesey Eisteddfod the same weekend that caused the complications. Since the Scout Rally itself was held on the Whit Monday, when the Eisteddfod opened, some Scouts would not be able to attend. When 3 Troops were involved with the Eisteddfod e.g. when it was held in Menai Bridge, one year, the Scouts altered their plans. They liked the weekend Rallies because they could get to know one another. They held debating sessions on Scouting topics, attended church and Scout’s Own services and held a Camp fire.

The County Commissioner, Charles V Taylor with Frank Bell, by then GSM of 1st Holyhead at the 1931 Rally held in Holyhead

Menai Bridge Group were quite late in starting their 1st Wolf Cub Pack. This was not until 1933 when Miss Nancy Luther Jones became Akela. She was joined by Miss K Williams and the Pack won the Rally in 1934 and were awarded the Totem pole made by Mr Richard Williams, the first CM of Holyhead.
Anglesey sent one Scout to Bad Ischl, Austria in 1951 (Caernarvonshire sent 3) This Scout was Kenneth Griffiths, later a leader with Holyhead. He wrote an account of his time there.

"1951 was an eventful year in my life for a number of reasons. I was a keen member of the 1st Holyhead Boy Scout Troop with Les Blackwell and Idris Lloyd Hughes as Scoutmasters, the uniform we wore was like the one shown in the Frank Bell window in St Cybi’s church. Possibly because of my interest I was privileged to be chosen to represent the Scouts of Anglesey at the 7th World Scout Jamboree at Bad Ischl in Austria. There I spent three weeks under canvas with fifteen thousand other scouts.

As it was only a few short years after the end of the 2nd World War the people of Britain were still suffering great shortages, food and many other items were still on ration, all very austere.

One way the Troop had of making money to buy camping gear etc. was to collect salvage. This was old newspapers and glass jam jars which was sold to dealers for re-cycling. This salvage was collected round the houses by means of a large two wheeled truck called a “Trek Cart”- this was our “Maid of all Work” as very few people had cars. This cart was used to carry our tents when we went camping, to collect salvage and fetch crates of “pop” and crisps from Keegan’s bottling stores in readiness for the Saturday night dances that were starting to become popular with youngsters at the Scouts Hall. At odd times the cart was used to move house furniture as a “good turn”.  

Nancy Luther Jones, K. Williams and the first Wolf Cub Pack of Menai Bridge after winning the Dragon totem at the Wolf Cub Rally of 1934
The school holidays arrived and it was finally time for me to go on my great adventure – for that is what it was in those days, especially for a 15 year old schoolboy – foreign holidays and package tours had not yet become popular.

I remember being taken in style to the railway station on the Marine Yard Fire Department's Fire Engine. (It so happened that Mr Frank Bell our Group Scout Master was also the Port Fire Captain!) At the station I waved farewell to my parents and sister and the many other well wishers and was given a Civic send off by Councillor Hugh Llewelyn Lewis, the chairman of the Holyhead Urban District Council in his chain of office and Mr Harry Stokes the Station Superintendent dressed in his official “Top hat and tails”. This uniform was normally only worn when Royalty passed through the Port. I was told later that this was the last time that it was worn.

At Crewe I joined the special train that was to carry me and a thousand other Scouts to the port of Newhaven. We crossed to France on an old steamer called the Arromanche and then boarded a French train with hard wooden seats and no buffet for our 48 hour journey to the campsite.

We eventually arrived. Tired and very hungry, although we had been given packed lunches which included a whole tin of sardines. What luxury after the rationing back home!"

He goes on to describe the scenery around the Jamboree and all the places visited and the Scouts he met. It was “Sound of Music” country and they pitched their tents 1,706 feet above sea level, surrounded by crystal clear lakes, one of which was the water supply. This had to be guarded by American soldiers in case the water was polluted by members of the Russian Young Communists who were holding their own Rally in Vienna, not so far away because this was the time of the “Cold War” with Russia.

“As neighbours we had a troop of Canadian Scottish Scouts complete with kilts and bagpipes which they played incessantly from dawn to dusk! This sound I found quite pleasant in small doses! On top of this, our other neighbours the Finns and the Austrians had their brass bands and the Germans about forty guitars so you can imagine the cacophony. To crown it all, every boy in the Jamboree had been given a Jew’s harp, apparently almost all these harps were made in a small village near the camp so it was adopted as the Jamboree Symbol. You could see it displayed everywhere – on posters, on flags and on the postage stamps. Die Maultrummel, that is, the Jews Harp was the name of the camp newspaper, published in German, French and English.

A colourful group that passed our camp from time to time were the Sudanese, they would pass by with bundles of firewood or buckets of water on their heads. Like us they cooked their food on campfires in marked contrast to the American
Scouts who had Army cooks using gas stoves. We were a bit envious of them but they did share ice cold Coca Cola from their fridges with us. This was the first time I had tasted it.

Something I will never forget was climbing a small hill overlooking the camp and seeing the smoke of hundreds of campfires spiralling up into the sky and the smell of the different foods cooking.

While I was in camp I met Lord Rowallan, then the Chief Scout of the UK and I also met Lady Olave Baden-Powell, wife of the Founder of our Movement. Sadly all good things come to an end, and it was time to pack up our tents and board the train for the long journey home. What an experience!

**Some Statistics and reports:**

1947

1st Holyhead. 22 Cub scouts, 23 Scouts, 14 Senior Scouts, 10 Rover Scouts.
2nd Holyhead. 14 Cub Scouts 13 Scouts, 2 Senior Scouts

1st Holyhead GSM Frank Bell. SM Leslie Blackwell. ASM N J MacLean.
2nd Holyhead GSM Rev H Pierce Jones. SM Haydn Richards, CM Miss J Botham

In December 1947, Miss W O Parry was promoted to ACC Cubs. This was after the long-serving Miss Mary Burton (Beaumaris) resigned. Both Miss Burton and Miss Dilys Jones (CM Amlwch and ADC Cubs) who resigned at the same time had been Scouters since at least 1921.

1950 District Reports.

Beaumaris (Mr Elwyn Lloyd Williams) Troop is 36 strong, Pack 24. It is now a Sea Scout Troop. Excellent work being done by Mr Harry Hawkswood and his assistants. It was hoped to purchase a boat in the near future.

Menai Bridge. No progress. Only 6 scouts. Mr Alun Morgan Jones was endeavouring to establish a troop against all odds. In the doldrums again.

Holyhead. Mr H V Richards. The Troop is 40 strong and there are 2 Packs. They are making slow but sure progress and the future is bright.

Llannerchymedd. Mr Thoday has been making a grand job of work since the inception of the Troop. (20 strong) It did not last very long.

Llangefni. No report. 18 Scouts. The long serving SM, Mr R J O Williams, died in 1953 leaving a young ASM “to struggle on”. They perked up later!

They mention the prospect of a Troop in Llanfair PG. A Mr Clark and a Mrs Gooding hoped to form a Troop and Pack in Rhosneigr and Rev. J H Williams, Chaplain hoped to form a Cub Pack in RAF Valley Station Married Quarters.

Miss Parry. The Cubs in Holyhead were in a very happy condition – but there was no response from the other parts of the island. She was willing to assist anyone wishing to form a pack in Anglesey.
Meetings then lapsed from 20th May 1953 until May 28th 1957 when they were revived with the presentation of the Silver Acorn to Frank Bell by Sir Richard Williams-Bulkeley, Bart, the President, at a public meeting in Holyhead.

Francis James Bell, former DC of North Anglesey.
Service:
ASM 1st Holyhead 1911 – 1916 SM 1st Holyhead 1916 – 1935

Citation: Frank Bell has outlived his contemporaries in the Movement and it is well nigh impossible to set down briefly concisely and conclusively his specially distinguished service of a most exceptional character.
H. J. Jones, County Commissioner of Caernarvonshire, who had also just received the Silver Acorn was there to congratulate him “as an old Holyhead Scout”. Wing Commander Tom Browne, another holder of the Award also attended the ceremony.

By 1958 things were looking up, Llangefni had 2 well qualified leaders in Mr And Mrs G C Fleming and they had a Leader Trainer and had started running County Training courses.

County Training course. 31st May/1st June 1958. Tyn y gongl (Benllech)
Scouters Preliminary. 15 candidates attended out of 19 nominations received.
Course approved by Gilwell Camp chief, in the charge of HT Evans County Deputy Camp Chief and Akela Leader assisted by G C Fleming, Llangefni.
Tents lent by 1st Amlwch and 1st Menai Bridge. Senior scouts of 1st Benllech in charge of messing arrangements.

Also Cub Scouters PTC 27/28 Sept 1958. Tyn y gongl.
15 attended out of 24 nominations.
Course approved by Gilwell Camp chief, in the charge of HT Evans County Deputy Camp Chief and Akela Leader assisted by Mrs G C Fleming, CM, Llangefni.
Congratulations to Mr H T Evans and Mrs Fleming on the success of the Course. Equipment lent by Amlwch and Llangefni Groups. Messing arrangements in charge of CC assisted by Miss Menai Wynn Jones (his daughter) and the Senior Scouts of 1st Benllech Troop.

Scout Part II course (Wood Badge Course ) September 1960.
This was held at Tyn y gongl, Benllech, Anglesey over 3 weekends. This was organised and run by Hugh Thomas Evans, ACC (T) Anglesey, assisted by George C. Fleming, DC South Anglesey (& SL Llangefni), Harry L Hawkswood, Commissioner for Sea Scouts for North Wales, (& GSL Beaumaris) T. E. W.
Browne, Assistant Commissioner for Training for North Wales and Ivor V. Owen ADC for Holyhead and District.

This was featured in the Holyhead and Anglesey Mail, Friday October 14th 1960.

Left to right, to right, back row.
G. W. Hughes, Menai Bridge.  D.A. Knowles, Bangor, Bryan R. Allport, Llandudno. (Became Caernarvonshire County Secretary in 1965 and continued in post until 1974 when the County became Gwynedd. He was then County Secretary of Gwynedd through the change to Area in 1996 and on until his retirement from this post at the AGM of 2001.)
H. T. Evans, Llanbedrogch, In 1957 The warrant of DC and Honourable Charge as Deputy Camp Chief and Akela Leader for Anglesey was formally presented to Thomas Hugh Evans by the County Commissioner, Iori Wynn Jones.
D Turner, Llandudno, Gwilym Robinson, Holyhead, (District Commissioner, appointed Autumn 1958)
William Cooke, RAF Valley (land scout uniform) In 1961, CC presented him, with the certificate and beads of the Wood Badge. He had the distinction of being the 1st Anglesey trained Wood Badge holder.

Seated: (Sea Scout Uniform except the last one)
Wing Commander Thomas E. W. Browne, Headmaster of HMS Conway, North Wales Training Commissioner. He was leader of the UK contingent to the Jamboree at Niagara on the Lake, Canada, in 1955. He was also a Sea Scout Commissioner for a time.
Charles Hainge, Bangor (7th city Group) Grandfather of the current Area Scout Network Commissioner, Mike Hainge)
Dennis Eaton, Holyhead. Sea Scout Leader then District Commissioner for North Anglesey for many years and also ACC (Venture Scouts)
F Allenby, Bangor,
Harry L. Hawkswood, Long serving Scouter with Beaumaris. Scoutmaster, Group Scoutmaster and Sea Scout Commissioner.
R L Williams, Beaumaris, E W Williams, Bangor, A J Edwards Beaumaris, Ivor V. Owen, RAF Valley. (Sergeant) ADC Holyhead District.

1960 Anglesey Scout Notes.
Senior Scout Peter Day of 1st Benllech Group gained the Silver D of E Award – the first Scout in North Wales to gain this honour. He was followed closely by Keith Scholfield of the same Group. Peter and Keith attended the Senior Scout Annual Camp in Snowdonia at Gwersyll y Bryniau for 8 days, the main base being at the OB School at Aberdyfi. There were 300 Senior Scouts there from the UK – mountaineering, rock scrambling, 45 mile overnight hike (mountain and climbing work) A very tough obstacle course styled on Commando training. At the termination of the course Peter and Keith were presented with their Silver insignia and parchments by Lord Kenyon, the chief Commissioner for Wales. Peter Day has almost completed the tests for the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. It is pleasing to record that Peter Day’s two sons also became Scouts and that he ran a Cub Pack in Benllech for quite a while.

And in 1961, Wing Commander T E W Browne, North Wales Training Commissioner, presented Sergeant Ivor V Owen, ADC Holyhead District with the Honour Charge and Beads of Office on his appointment as Assistant Akela Leader in the North Wales Training Team. At the same meeting the CC presented William Cooke, 1st Valley with the certificate and beads of the Wood Badge. He said “He has the distinction of being the 1st Anglesey trained Wood Badge holder. The CC wished him God Speed and the county’s best wishes in his new posting in Scotland. “He will be missed in Scouting circles especially as Quarter master for the Whit camp.” Losing leaders is a continuing problem.

In April 1961 on St George’ Day at Windsor the County was represented by Mrs Jean Gooding Asst Akela Leader for North Wales and Queen’s Scouts Peter Day 1st Benllech and Len Loader, 1st Llangefni. There was a sad note at the 1964 AGM. They recorded the tragic death by drowning, of W. J. Strong, whilst at Summer Camp with 1st Holyhead Troop was mentioned and the gathering observed a brief silence in his memory.
Subscriptions were collected towards the presentation of a suitable commemorative plaque or religious ornament to the Roman Catholic Church Holyhead where Billy was an altar boy.
In 1964 at the St George’s Day Parade, Windsor. The county was represented by 2 Beaumaris Sea scouts, Senior Scout A J Harrison, Holyhead (as holder of the Silver Cross for Gallantry awarded for his part in the rescue attempt in the River Valting tragedy in July 1963 when Billy Strong lost his life whilst at Summer Camp with 1st Holyhead Troop at Llanddewi near Llandrindod Wells) and Mr Dennis Eaton, ADC, contingent leader.
In 1965, Beaumaris was congratulated on their efforts and reimbursed for incidental expenses for the organisation of the beacon light project as part of the campaign for the preservation of the coastline. At the St George’s Day Service at Windsor, the county was represented by 2 Queen’s Scouts from Beaumaris and C B Hollingham, ADC, as one of the contingent leaders in the Parade. On 7th May 1965 a slate plaque commemorating the opening of the Scout Hall was unveiled at Holyhead. The Silver Acorn was presented to Miss W O Parry, BA and the Medal of Merit to Dennis Eaton.

Since these times Scouting has declined in Anglesey as elsewhere with Groups closing and numbers falling. At the present time there is only one Group in Holyhead (2nd Holyhead, (St. Cybi’s) – once there were four! Amlwch, Llangefni, Benllech and Menai Bridge are still working at present.

**Some Personal Recollections.**

"Memories of a Bangor Scout."

I was able to speak to our former County Commissioner, Iorweth Wynn Jones, affectionately known as “Iori” about his days of active Scouting. In 1922, he was a founder member of the 1st Cub Pack formed in Bangor. Miss Thomas, daughter of Dr Thomas, Nantllys, Deiniol Rd., Bangor came to Garth School to tell them about forming a Pack. Three boys were interested. She went then to Cae Top School and got another three boys. They met on the lawn at Nantllys and worked for their Tenderpad. After they had achieved this they recruited another six boys. Norman D. Jones took over the Pack. They met in the Christian Science room near the Town Clock where the precinct is today. Other Cub Leaders he remembers are Miss Richards who later married the Scout Master, Mr Warren, and Miss Agnes Kerr.

In 1927 Norman Woodhead took over and worked on until the 1950s. He eventually became ACC. In 1928 the County Commissioner for North Caernarvonshire was Mr Tipping of Llandudno. He was a professional musician, a member of Bangor University College Trio.

During the period 1922-1930 there were Scout Troops in Bangor, Caernarfon (Sea Scouts), Conwy, Cricieth (Sea Scouts), Penmaenmawr, Llanfairfechan, Llandudno (2 Groups, Sea Scouts and Land Scouts) There were also Scouts in Aber, Llandybiegai, and Llanberis where Rev JH Williams started 1st Snowdon. Idris Roberts was the SM of Llandybiegai troop and served on the County Committee for many years and also the camping ground at Nant Heilyn.
There were close links between the Bangor Troop and the Beaumaris Troop in Anglesey. Scout Master Warren, his wife, and Miss Kerr, (CM) were named as Judges in some of the Anglesey Rallies.

Iori became the Troop Leader in Bangor and during that time he had his photograph taken with SM Warren and Mrs Von der Heyde, Beaumaris ASM and later SM. He ruefully explained how he had destroyed the photograph a few weeks before we talked!

He had gained All Round Cords, Bushman's Thong and the King's Scout badge. He became ASM of 1st Bangor Group and was a member of the Toc H Rovers at Port Penrhyn, with Mr Aspden as Rover Mate. These Rovers also helped out as judges at some of the Anglesey Rallies.

During the 1930s Mr E Whitworth from Birkenhead started another Troop – 2nd Bangor, which met in the same place, but on a different night. Mr Whitworth married Miss Kerr. Ron Edwards took on the Sea Scouts afterwards. He was later DC Arfon.

In 1933, Iori was a member of the contingent who went to the Jamboree in Godollo, Hungary. David Butter and Llew Hughes (St Mary’s vicar later, and before then, Curate and SM Menai Bridge) also went. He kept a Log book which is now lodged with the Welsh Scout Council. At the end they went to Budapest by railway and stayed at a Hotel which possessed a swimming pool with waves!

Iori himself formed the 1st Eryri Scouts. They met in Nantgwynant and were keen on climbing. They held a number of Climber Camps at Nantgwynant. This became a National event and went on until the early 1950s when Mr Woodhead retired. Hence the caravan which a later Caernarfonshire Committee had to have destroyed because it was an eyesore and was costing them rates!

Iori visited Kandersteg in Switzerland twice, the first was a “pilot” in 1936 in preparation for taking a group of 21 Scouts the following year. On their way home in 1936 they stopped in Paris to see the exhibition and watched television for the very first time! Hugh J Jones (Later CC) went to Kandersteg with Iori. He had been a Lieutenant in the SW Borderers and gassed in WW1, and had lung damage and so had difficulty climbing. A Dr Schwarz took them up the Gemmi Pass. They saw some Girl Guides using the “Swiss Pace” and they learnt how to do it – “even HJ!” Hence forward Eryri Scouts used the Swiss Pace. He remembers that the then Warden of Kandersteg International Scout Chalet greeted people with “Goodbye”!

He also attended Welsh Jamborees and went to Esgairfelen (Pantperthog) for Gwersyll y Bryniau – another series of camps. He recollected that every year it did not rain, it poured! He served on the staff of two Jamborees at Ruabon.

He left Bangor in July 1939 to work in Colwyn Bay. In 1947 he went to Prestatyn. He was great friends with John Sweet the Field Commissioner who lived there then. He did not leave Scouting, he became Chairman of the Local Association
and helped with Flintshire County Camps. He moved to live in Anglesey in 1954 where he worked as a Sanitary Inspector. In 1955, John Sweet got permission from the Medical Officer of Health for him to become County Commissioner for Anglesey. He remembers Mr Chadwick, a District Commissioner in Anglesey producing a uniform for him which was “miles too big”.

He knew most of the Caernarvonshire Scouters up to 1939 and especially mentioned Miss Dot Parry, Assistant County Commissioner Wolf Cubs, a Leader Trainer and organiser of the North Wales Scouting Conference for many years. She was awarded the Silver Wolf in 1967, an honour Iori himself gained in 1974. He admitted to a gap in his local Scouting knowledge from 1939 until 1954. He naturally then got to know the Scouters of Anglesey. Mr Harry Hawkewood was Beaumaris SL from 1940 – 1960 and attended their 70th Birthday Celebrations in 1980 along with Sir Richard Williams-Bulkeley, County Scouts President.

A Mr R G Williams-Bulkeley was the original Scout Master of the Beaumaris Troop, he was also the 1st County Commissioner for Anglesey. He was the son of Sir Richard H. Williams-Bulkeley of Baron Hill, the County President, served in the Army in WW1 and died of wounds in 1918.

Iori’s brother, Maldwyn, was also involved with Scouting for many years. An article in the North Wales chronicle celebrates the fact that between them in 1973 they had over 90 years with the Scout Movement between them (Iori: 50 years and Maldwyn: 40) Mr Maldwyn Jones was chief Public Health Inspector for Holyhead Urban District Council for many years. He was the County Secretary for Anglesey for many years and later Badge Secretary. He was awarded the Silver Acorn in 1970. For many years he was Group Scout Leader of 1st Holyhead Sea Scouts, where a certain Dennis Eaton was Scout Leader. The following year Mr Maldwyn Jones retired and left the area and the Group presented him with a gold inscribed watch. Accepting the gift he thanked the Association saying that he had become involved with the Scouts at an early age. He told them that when he came to Holyhead and had been introduced to Mr Frank Bell, pioneer of Scouts there he had vowed to “follow the tracks” of that great Scouter. Since he was with Holyhead Scouts, he also knew Miss Weada Olsen Parry, Anglesey ACC Cubs and long serving Cubmaster in Holyhead.

The AGM of Gwynedd County Scout Council, Thursday May 5th 1988, in Bangor was Iori Wynn Jones’ last meeting as County Chairman. There he stated that he was proud of 66 years of unbroken service, 22 years as County Commissioner and County Chairman from 1977. He was staying on as a Vice President of the Welsh Scout Council and of Gwynedd County Scout Council. He also served as part time warden at Cornel and Hafod. His proudest possession is his Silver Wolf.
Iori and Maldwyn, 90 years service between them! Pictured in the local paper in 1974.
Maldwyn: Medal of Merit in 1960, Long Service Decoration and Silver Acorn in 1970

Melvyn P. Griffiths, DC Arfon for a short time and later AAC International (1990 – 2004) relates how his Scouting career began, and how he tackled first the role of District Commissioner and later that of ACC International.

My first involvement was about 1948 with the 3rd Holyhead Cubs under the leadership of Miss Weada Parry. We met in a classroom at the Cybi Secondary Modern School. I left after a very short time and joined the Scouts who met at the Scouts’ Hall, with Haydn Richards as Leader. However, Dennis Eaton another Leader at the time expressed a desire to start a Sea Scout Section and within a short period of time that came to fruition with us meeting at a basement of Sat Elbod’s Church in Rhos y Gaer Avenue, Holyhead.

During my period with the Sea Scouts, Dennis was supported by his wife Monica, and, although we learnt basic Scouting skills, the troop also enjoyed going out on treks. On one occasion I was requested by Dennis to pretend to break a leg, somewhere in the Porth Dafarch area, basically to establish whether or not all the first aid instructions had been digested by the other Scouts. As expected, they dealt with me correctly. It was nice to be carried back to our HQ.

I also recall attending Caernarfon to line the route. It was probably in 1952, when Queen Elizabeth visited the town before her Coronation. The troop also visited
London at the time of the Festival of Britain in 1951 and we slept overnight in a local Scout HQ.

I do not recall many camps, although we had a camp somewhere in the Cemaes Bay Area where for the first time I tasted the necks of geese, stewed with carrots, peas and potatoes. When hungry even that was good! There was also a winter camp somewhere in the Colwyn Bay area, we slept in barrack type huts and the site was called Heron Water. What I do remember is having to wash outside, on one occasion when the snow was falling.

I left the Scouts and my next involvement was when I was invited to become District Commissioner for Arfon in February 1989. I subsequently attended adult leader training at Gilwell in September 1990 and obtained my wood badge in 1991. My time as District Commissioner was relatively short but I was soon roped in again under a different “hat”!

**Arfon District. (Later changed to Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa) and now amalgamated with Dwyfor District to form the new Gwynedd District.)**

When I was asked to take on the role of District Commissioner in the Arfon District, the post had been vacant for some time. However, when the newly appointed County Commissioner, the Rev. Gwyndaf Hughes asked one of his parishioners, namely, myself, whether I would be prepared to take on the responsibilities of DC, of course, couldn’t refuse and agreed to do so, commencing in February 1989.

The District comprised at that time of Caernarfon, Bangor Bethesda, Llanberis and surrounding areas. I realised from the outset that some Sections were stronger than others and noted that Section numbers fluctuated up and down and that obviously had to be addressed. The matter was discussed with leaders and various suggestions were considered, including for example, making the programmes in all Sections more interesting and exciting. This included the Annual General Meeting! It was generally agreed that parents and other outsiders should be considered as support workers that would assist greatly in the pressure of work on the leaders.

There was an obvious tendency for some Sections to be very insular with no contact or integration with other Sections even in their own Group and certainly not with Sections in adjoining groups. I actively promoted the idea of having cross section activities, joint meetings and by doing so spreading their wings so to speak and deriving more satisfaction, enjoyment, making new contacts and building up character and confidence for the members in each Section.

In order to extend the Scouts’ individual experience, visits by local Sections to visiting Scouts was encouraged and, where appropriate, joint activities and camping. Again, this was a means of encouraging integration, co-operation and
of course, the possibility of links. On the subject of visiting Scouts from other areas, I made it a priority, if possible, to visit them all personally, and if unable to do so, would delegate another Leader to do so on my behalf.

The question of Leader Training and Warrants was raised by the Training Commissioner (Cliff Newman) and that matter was addressed with sufficient courses being arranged either locally or in other counties.

Excellent County events were arranged and although, as stated, some Sections were rather parochial, it was pleasing to note that all Section involvement with these events was very encouraging and entailed a lot of dedication and hard work. Such events included the swimming galas, orienteering competitions and water sports.

I was very pleased to note that within a short period of time, visits to outside bodies became more popular and they were encouraged, for example, visits to the fire service, local police stations (hopefully all fingerprints taken have been destroyed!) coastguards, old people’s homes, Chinese restaurants, zoos etc. Camping and hiking expeditions obviously made Scouting more interesting and hopefully played its part in persuading others to join us, also for Cubs the excitement of taking part in an overnight stop, somewhere away from the home area.

From the point of view of publicity, it was regarded as an excellent way to promote the Scout Movement when Sections/Groups participated in fund raising for various charities and took part in such projects as litter picking on beaches and parks.

In general, bearing in mind that the District had been without a DC for a number of years, during the period when I was DC, Feb. 1989 to July 1992, there did appear to be an increased enthusiasm within the Sections, and that was to be applauded.

**International Activities.**

I was appointed Assistant County Commissioner, International for Gwynedd in July 1992. I soon found out that for many years prior to my taking on the role of ACC International, the international dimension in the county was nil, other than a few Scouts travelling abroad on visits.

When I became ACC International I took the matter seriously from the outset, and promoted it from various directions, although I was personally astounded that some Scouter’s felt that the International Dimension in the county was irrelevant! As ACC International, my stated objective was to inform all sections of
what was available in respect of opportunities abroad and in the UK, such as exchange visits, camps and specific events which were international in context. International awareness within sections became a real issue and within a short period of time, leaders, not surprisingly, became very enthusiastic and supportive. They became aware of the vast programme available and the advantages of including International in their section programmes. I became involved in workshops and visited sections to speak at their meetings, promoting and pushing to the foreground the various projects available.

The following are examples:

**J.O.T.A. (Jamborees on the Air)** A fantastic example of this took place every year without fail at Pwllheli. It was arranged by Tudor Bell, ably assisted by his Scouts and Leaders, and, in particular involving members of the Radio/wireless hams from Pwllheli. For several years they made contact with Scouts from as far afield as Canada and Australia and in fact made contact with a space ship in outer space.

If that is not “international” what is?!

**Projects involving foreign food, culture, education, dress and sport.** Some Sections visited foreign restaurants to taste the food available and some even invited chefs to demonstrate the cooking of food, with of course, free samples at the end.

Liaising with such organisations as Rotary and Round Table to collect items of clothing, tools etc. to make up “Emergency Boxes” for sending abroad to assist countries which had experienced flooding, earthquakes and such like. The contents of the boxes were simply to help until international aid was received. By participating in such projects the Sections were then entitled to apply for the International Friendship Award.

The above are only a few examples of subjects which have “International” as the focus. There are so many, the scope is immense, all however, with the objective of increasing the “International Dimension” and to get away from the parochial attitude. Scouting is International and like football, it is played home and away.

I was adamant that a priority was to encourage members of the County to travel abroad, and also to host and to make contact with foreign Scouts but found it difficult to obtain a positive response from leaders! They did not know what they missed.

I responded positively to all foreign requests for information on visiting the County. I encouraged them to come to Wales and in particular to North Wales, and all necessary information was passed to all Sections. In my view, it was one way of bringing the International Dimension to the Sections. Those who responded gained much from the experience and were able to participate in projects both on and off camps and subsequently keep in contact with the relevant visitors.
Between July 1992 and June 2004, many foreign Scouts visited our County/Area. They came from Belgium, Ireland, Germany, Sweden, Hungary, Finland, Russia, Netherlands, Denmark, and the USA. Some of them took part in the Welsh Explorer Belt Expedition in 1995. Then in my final year in post, 2003, a major event took place when 460 Scouts from Essen, Germany, camped for 3 weeks in Benllech. There was excellent cooperation with joint activities by local Scouts and the German visitors. Also in 2003, 46 Swedish Scouts on an Explorer Belt Expedition with a very impressive presentation ceremony on the Dais at Caernarfon Castle where Prince Charles was invested Prince of Wales.

During the same period of time Scouts from the County/Area have visited the following foreign countries. Caernarfon Scouts went to Sweden, on four occasions and also to France. Llandudno (Orme Group) to France on three occasions and Switzerland twice. Deganwy to France on 3 occasions and also to Belgium, Holland, Switzerland twice. Abergele to Switzerland, and Llangefni Scouts to Hechingen, Germany (1999). My wife and I accompanied Llangefni for a two week camp.

Other events of particular interest were the following: Some Groups made links with Cubs and Scouts in other countries e.g. in 1994 Llangefni Cubs under the leadership of Caroline Jones linked with Cubs from Apac, Uganda and in 1996/97 Trearddur Bay instigated a link with Nova Scotia. The Uganda link was strengthened during 1999/2000 In 1997 when the whole Area was involved in collecting and making items to send to Apac, Uganda and our (then) newly appointed Area Commissioner, Jill Glover went to Apac with a group. In 1997, Tina Scotney represented the Welsh Scouts at the W.I.S.H. project when Scouts from Slovenia, Hungary, Ireland and Wales participated. The County/Area has frequently sent representatives to the various World Jamborees and Welsh Jamboree and some Troops regularly take part in International Jamborees held in the UK.

In June 2004, I left the Scout Movement and handed over the reins to Mr Roy Whittington.
Memoirs of a Wolf Cub (only just)
Tudor Bell, an ex-Anglesey Scout now DC Gwynedd, District.

I attended my first pack meeting in November 1966; I wasn’t yet 8, but I think a few strings had been pulled. I was invested on 13 April 1967 and joined Black Six. In 1967 with the Advance Party Report things changed and I had to swap my grey jersey for a green one. We were now Cub Scouts. I met the Chief Scouts, Lord Charles McLean at Holyhead when I formed part of his welcome party. He had a very strong handshake, which nearly pulled my arm out of its socket. In 1969 after the Investiture of Prince Charles as Prince of Wales, the Royal Party boarded the Royal Yacht Britannia at Holyhead. The Cubs and Scouts of the town were invited to form a guard of honour at McKenzie Pier. I remember playing in a District Cubs football match against RAF Valley Cubs. We won resoundingly and I never touched the ball all match. I only attended one Cub Camp. The rules were different then as only the older Cubs were allowed to camp. We camped opposite Lord Stanley’s old house at Penrhos. It was a wet and windy Friday night and the leaders never got to sleep. Not because of the noise the Cubs made, but because they spent all night rushing from one tent to another trying to stop them taking off into the darkness. When I reached 10, I started working towards my Link Badge, was awarded it and moved up to the Troop when I was 11.

In Scouts I joined the Lion Patrol. I stayed in the same Patrol for all my time in the Troop, becoming APL and PL in turn. In Scouts we did a lot of traditional Scouting - pioneering, hiking, map and compass, first aid, cooking on open fires, and we never got bored with it as we were always going out and doing things. We had numerous camps, locally as well as around North Wales and further afield. The Troop also acted as a service team for the Groups Cub Camp every year. I met the Chief Scout, Lord McLean, again while I was in Scouts. He was again visiting Holyhead, and my Patrol had set up a camp kitchen. The Chief tried our coffee but was not impressed. In autumn 1974 there was a change in the Leaders of the Troop. The four elders of the Troop were ‘invited to leave’ by the new leadership team and start a Venture Scout Unit. Setting up the Unit from scratch was an interesting task. We sorted an Executive Committee, bank accounts and a programme, and after a few false starts things took off and the Unit grew. The first project we had was a first aid course. With the help of Ron Keating, our instructor, we all passed. The Unit kept this up, every year for many years. We organised many camps and expeditions in Snowdonia and the Lake District,
including one Queen Scout expedition traversing the Lake District. The Unit organised a number of events for the Cubs and Scouts of the District. The longest running event was the District Cub Football Competition. The trophy is still about and can be found in the 2nd Holyhead HQ. Members of the Unit helped the Cub and Scout sections in the Group, some of us becoming CSI (Cub Scout Instructors not crime scene investigation). It was during this time I met my second Chief Scout, William Gladstone. He was visiting the District at Amlwch and the Cub Pack I was with welcomed him with semaphore flags.

In 1977 the Unit went mixed and shortly after one of the young ladies was awarded the Venture Scout Award. She was the first to gain it in the District, and we think, the County.

We used to spend a lot of time at Hafod, both on courses and as part of the working party. Some of us worked towards our 'Hafod Cards', which I got shortly after leaving the Unit. While on working parties we helped enlarge the reservoir behind the building and laid the telephone cable to the centre. This involved digging a ditch from the A5 down to Hafod, under the minor road, laying the cable, back filling the trench and re-turfing the trench. A lot of work but good fun.

My personal claim, to anyone who has been to Hafod and hung their coat on a hook in the covered courtyard. I putt those hooks up one wet Sunday morning in 1979. They must be a historical monument by now.

Age catches up with all of us eventually and I was retired from the Unit in February 1979. To mark the occasion the Unit had cooked a Chinese meal of gargantuan proportions. Not just for me, but for the Unit members and all the Group Leaders who had been with me through the years.

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The details supplied by Mark Winson., Former AAC(development) and former Welsh Scout Council Local Development officer, then back as a Scout Leader with Caernarfon Scout Group and now again LDO with Clwyd Scouts.

In August 2002, work started in Snowdonia and Anglesey on a new development project, as the result of successful bid made by the Area Commissioner, Jill Gloster, to the Welsh Scout Council. The aim of the project was to provide the area with a full time paid development officer, whose remit was to “Create and develop new Scouting groups and sections across the Snowdonia and Anglesey area, by recruiting teams of volunteer adult leaders, providing premises, on-going training and support and management until the group or section became stable and self-reliant”.

In the first six week period, the field commissioner, Clive Bracewell, was tasked as line manager to brief the new local development officer (LDO), Mark Winson, a former Scout leader with the 1st Caernarfon Group. After strategy and working
practices had been decided upon work began in July 2003 upon the first three targets, these were Harlech Cubs, Harlech Beavers and Pwllheli Beavers.

After a supportive meeting with the headmaster of Ysgol Tan Y Castell Primary school in Harlech, two in school taster sessions, one for each section, were run with good attendance by supporting warranted Scout leaders. This initial show of interest was followed, one week later, by a second session which was advertised for the children and parents. This session resulted in the recruitment of twelve new adult leaders who all agreed to attend the start of the new Beaver and Cub Scout section meetings the following week at the established Scout premises. One week later only two of those adults apparently recruited attended the meetings! This initial setback illustrated the kind of problems that had to be overcome over the following three years. Having identified that those adults recruited in the afternoon at the school, were not necessarily available in the evenings, when the sections met, the project was restarted. An open night was scheduled for the evening that the sections would subsequently meet and advertised through the schools to its pupils and their parents, whereupon a successful night resulted in the recruitment of eight adult volunteers. Continuing work identified a lack of Beavers Scout Leaders and it was decided to close that section and focus on the Cub Scout Section. Over the following twelve weeks, the LDO and warranted support engaged the new adults in training, culminating in the presentation of five new warrants.

Summary:
Over the following three years work was undertaken in many areas;
Establishing 5 new Beaver Scout colonies, re-establishing 3 Beaver Scout colonies,
Establishing 1 new Cub Pack and re-establishing 4 Cub Packs and re-vitalising 1 Group, 1 Beaver Scout Colony and 1 Cub Scout Pack.
In June 2005, due to the failure to secure continued grant funding, the project came to an end. Whilst there were many successes there were some failures. However, the work of the LDO and the support team, for the duration of the project resulted in:
Adult volunteers recruited: 202; Adult volunteers retained at June 2005: 134

Many lessons were learnt whilst demonstrating that development within Scouting in Snowdonia and Anglesey is possible providing there are the resources available.

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The information given above is as accurate as I have been able to make it. I would be grateful to anyone who can help further. There is much more to add – new information is being received all the time and some gaps will be filled in the future. The material recorded above is mostly the information collected in time for the Centenary Year.

Each Scout Group deserves a full history to be researched and published. This will be aided by the fact that soon after John Muston first became CC he suggested that we produce a County Newsletter. I became its editor and the Gwynedd Scout Newsletter made its first appearance in the summer of 1990. It is now the Eryri a Môn, Area Scout Newsletter and is published 6 times a year. I would be pleased to hear from anyone who wishes to add information and/or photographs to our Area History.

Delyth Wilson, Area Heritage Co-ordinator, Eryri a Môn.

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Scouting in the Areas

Jamborees

An abundance of material relating to World and Welsh Jamborees has been received. Welsh contingents have attended all the World gatherings since 1920, and Jamboree Cymru was held every four years from 1948 until 1997. In 2001 the event was cancelled because of the outbreak of foot and mouth disease, and its future is presently being reassessed. Numbers had declined sharply between 1993 and 1997 and there are questions about the demand for such events in the future.

About 400 Scouts from Wales went to Olympia in 1920, and there were, as one correspondent noted ‘Good references to Swansea!’

The 24th Swansea (Wesley) troop put on a scenic display of a colliery accident, which involved 37 scouts (all under 18, as was noted) and lasted for fourteen minutes. This involved the erection of a pit head, a simulated explosion, and a display of rescue and first aid work. It was described as ‘an excellent demonstration of emergency scoutcraft’.

The Tug o’ War teams were defeated by lack of weight, and a gallant effort in the Foot Obstacle race saw a team from West Glamorgan lose in the final to Norway.

The Trek Cart race saw great dramatics. Only one of the three teams made it through the first round, but the B team went through four rounds undefeated, only to lose to Denmark in the final on what the observer clearly thought was a technicality. In the Boxing, Wales won two ‘gold medals’ (except that there weren’t any) in both the heavier divisions, but their Marathon cycle race team was disqualified for failing to read the instructions — a fault which even the partisan commentator could not excuse.

Altogether a good time was had by all.

A mere sample of the numerous comments on Jamboree Cymrus must suffice. In July 1952 The Scout magazine carried a feature describing the camp then being held at Picton Castle. All the activities were designed to produce ‘Jamboree dollars’ for the winners, and the patrol with the largest number of dollars at the end of the camp would receive a special award. The magazine itself was sponsoring Patrol expeditions, designed and set up by various scouting celebrities, and a good take up was anticipated. Saturday, 2nd August, was to be ‘observation day’ during which secret infiltrators into the camp would have to be identified, and detective mystery solved. The day would conclude with a ‘show down’ at the evening Camp Fire. ‘I hope the weather keeps fine’ the commentator added optimistically.