

## 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, Llanrhystud, 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.

## II. Administrative Structure.

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

Districts" 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 fine 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 fine 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 Fronhyfyd, 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 but and 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 Scouters". 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 Penrhynoch, Borth and Tregaron fit the bill as larger settlements which spawned Groups and will be looked at first. Penrhynoch, 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 Penrhynoch 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 Penrhynoch 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 Leontia 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, Rhyd Lewis, 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 Parcllyn 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 9 Scouts, totalling 27. 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 Parcllyn 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

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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

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