

Scouting

I had been an ASM (later ASL) since 1953 at Southend on Sea. In 1959 I was offered a job at Broadmoor Hospital, Crowthorne, which I accepted. I moved to Crowthorne with Dorothy (my wife) and my three children, John aged 15, Peter aged 11 and Diana aged 2. At first I was busy learning my new job but in 1960 Arthur Fraser told me that 1st Crowthorne Troop needed scouters so I joined 1st Crowthorne as an ASL to find that Arthur and I were the only scouters apart from Mrs Yvonne Pearmain (of the Pearmain family who owned the local garage) who was CSL.

Arthur and I ran the Troop for several years until Arthur joined the RAF and Walter (Jock) Scott, a Scouter from Bracknell, moved to Crowthorne and transferred to our Group. Later Jock and I were joined by Mike Perry. We made an interesting trio. Jock had been in the Navy during the War, Mike in the RAF and I in the Army. In the Cub Scout section of the Group as well as Mrs Pearmain I remember there were from time to time Cub Scouters named Mrs Joyce Weston, Mrs Barbara Francis, Mrs Pat Hartwell and Mrs Diana Rand.

During the 1960s the Troop had an annual camp and participated in most District events and challenges. Favourite camping sites were at Biblins (Ross on Wye), Berrow (near Weston-super-Mare), Shanklin and Havenstreet in the Isle of Wight, and West Bay, Bridport. We camped in farmers' fields and were welcomed there.

It was my custom to devote one day of Summer Camp to a Patrol adventure. Each Patrol would be given money for food and a town to visit with various tasks to perform. One year everyone was supplied with an Isle of Wight tram pass to enable them to travel anywhere on the island network. One Patrol visited every station, another Patrol visited Ryde and, asked to get the autograph of a well-known person there, they proudly brought back the autograph of the captain of the Portsmouth to Ryde hovercraft.

Our Venture Scouts during my time under Bill Williams and later under Dave Chivers did numerous projects. I remember the day in 1966 when England won the Football World Cup the Venture Scouts were returning from a camping trip to Wales and they said the roads were deserted while the population of England were watching the match on TV. The Senior (later Venture) Scouts had numerous activities including a week on the Grand Union canal in Buckinghamshire and Warwickshire.

The Group had some successes as teams in District events and as individuals. Several Queen's Scouts and Chief Scout Awards were gained and Scouters were awarded Medals of Merit. Our Group with its desirable headquarters' buildings in the grounds of Wellington College were able (with the permission of the Master of Wellington College and the co-operation of the Guide Captains) to offer our Scout District the use of the facilities to run leadership courses for Scouts in South-East and South Berks Districts.

During my time our Group Committee had Mr Leonard Leakey of Wellington College, Mr Derek Angwin of Wellington College and numerous parents of Scouts, Cubs, Venture Scouts and Scouters. Mr Derek Angwin was Chairman of the Group Committee and later of the District Committee. Dads were invaluable when we built a second hut at our HQ in Wellington College. The fathers found an old Army hut for sale, bought it and re-erected it next to our existing hut. One of the Senior Scouts, Peter Cooper, installed the electrics which were approved by the manager of a Crowthorne electrical firm.

In 1973 I was asked to become District Commissioner of South-East and South Berks and had to leave 1st Crowthorne. I left it however in capable hands and with a good number of good Scouts keeping it going. My pride has always been the large number of boys who, thanks to 1st Crowthorne, have been and still are good citizens (and some are now good grandfathers!).