



*In this issue we look back on the history of the District
and its Scouting activities*

Quote from the first CO-ORDINATOR - June 1959

What's All This About?

This is CO-ORDINATOR, which is intended to co-ordinate ideas of Scouters and Cubbers by helping to ensure that everyone concerned knows what is going to happen, when. Letchworth District Rover crew are producing and distributing, but it is our hope that everyone will join in the provision of material. We shall welcome any suggestions, comments, criticisms, ideas, funny stories, hints, tips, news of good camping sites (or bad ones), dates of forthcoming events (even if you are not inviting other groups, you may avoid two events clashing) and we shall accept small advertisements at halfpenny a word. Tell any member of LDRC.

District Outlook by the DC

It gives me much pleasure to add a few words to the first issue of CO-ORDINATOR. It is hoped this will fill the gap in communications that so often exists, not only in our district but it seems in many parts of the country. Scouters have many commitments and cannot always attend meetings, and we at District have not had a satisfactory method of circulating all the news, dates and reports. CO-ORDINATOR, I feel, will be the answer. I trust you will all read it and save it for reference.

It is now up to you all to supply news items and reports, or even this newsletter will dry up for lack of information. Thank you, Rovers, and good luck to this venture. May it long continue!

**District
Commissioners**

Letchworth & Baldock Scout District was not formed until May 1944. Before that, Baldock (with Bygrave, Clothall, Radwell, Stotfold and Weston) shared a District Commissioner with Royston - Captain J V Jacklin in the 1920's and Sir Cecil Neuman in the mid thirties. They thought of asking to join Letchworth in November 1936, decided not to, and closed down in 1938.

Ralph West was First Letchworth's Scoutmaster by 1922, Rover Scout leader by 1933, and District Commissioner by 1938. Alfred Hodgson became the first DC of Letchworth & Baldock, 1945-1954;

**The District Commissioner's follow-up to Les Brown's
Message in the first issue**

It was Les Brown's wish that *Co-ordinator* would 'fill a gap in communications'. How that wish has been fulfilled! Thirty Five years and four hundred editions later Co-ordinator remains an important feature of our District.

Edition no. 329 announced my appointment as District Commissioner. A glance through the following issues shows all the fun of Scouting in the groups, the adventure of overseas expeditions and World Jamborees, the pageantry of St George's Day, the excitement of meeting the Chief Scout at the County Camp at Gilwell and our celebrations for the Cub's 80th Anniversary and the Venture Scout's 21st Anniversary.

Our thanks go to all the Editors and contributors and our hope is that Co-ordinator remains active for another four hundred issues as a reflection of Scouting in the 21st Century.

Bob Williams

then...



Leslie Brown	1955-1963
Harold Hodge	1963-1964
Edward Smith	1964-1967
Frederick Eaves	1967-1976
Peter Norton	1976-1984
Ronald Wilkes	1984-1986
Frederick Cogar	1986-1987
Robert Williams	1988-

BC (Before Co-ordinator)

...'Scouting for Boys' had been in print for 51 years, and Scouting had been going on around here for 50 of them.

...**In 1912**, Letchworth had a boating holiday from Cambridge to Upware with Scoutmaster Norman Saunders.

...**Reg March** was in charge of eleven Scouts camping at Wilbury in August 1913 while sixteen others were at a 'large' international camp' with French and German Scouts at Ghent in Belgium. It cost them £1 each.

...**Scoutmaster F Cockburn** and Baldock Boy Scouts camped at Willian in July 1914. Dr G B Mason was their SM when the troop was first registered in 1915.

...**First Baldock's** drum and bugle band led the parade of Barley, Letchworth, Royston and Weston Scouts after their field day on Easter Monday 1916.

...**HP Pack** was Ashwell's Scoutmaster around 1917. Two years later the troop got registered number 29 from Imperial Headquarters, and First Baldock was number 1527 - changed to 18, nine years later.

...**Wolf Cubs** began (for boys under 11) in 1916, and Miss Allen was Cubmaster for the Second Letchworth pack at the Church Rooms in Commeræ Avenue. She was Scoutmaster as well.

...**First and Second Letchworth** held a concert in May 1928 in the Co-Op Hall. Another in the same place in 1955 was the first of 21 annual Gang Shows.

...**The Rotary Club** sponsored the formation of the Letchworth Local Association in 1926, but the first District AGM didn't take place till November 1928.

...**Third Letchworth** group was registered from 1929 to 1947, meeting at Pixmore School. Fourth Letchworth was going to be called First Willian (St Paul's), and has been there since 1929.

...**In 1930 Letchworth District** had its first camping competition for the Icknield Shield. First Letchworth (PLK Raven) won with 111 1/2 points; Second were second, Third third and Fourth fourth!

...**Fifth Letchworth** (in Spring Road) were registered in 1929, performed a pantomime 'Dick Whittington' for camp funds in May 1930 and camped at Llanmaes in August.

...**All five Letchworth troops** put on a display at the 'new hut' in Nevells Road on 14 February 1931. In November 1935 the District AGM approved the scheme for a District Headquarters.

Our Numbers - Then & Now - Can you see the changes?

1959	1994
1st Letchworth	57 1/3 Letchworth
2nd Letchworth	50 4th Letchworth
3rd Letchworth	55 5th Letchworth
4th Letchworth	59 7th Letchworth
5th Letchworth	21 8th Letchworth
7th Letchworth	60 11th Letchworth
1st Baldock	72 12th Letchworth
2nd Baldock	36 1st Baldock
1st Ashwell	26 2nd Baldock
1st Weston	9 1st Ashwell
Rover Scouts	8 Beech Springs VSU
	Champion Hills VSU
Wolf Cubs	248 Beaver Scouts
Boy Scouts	167 Cub Scouts
Senior Scouts	30 Scouts
Rover Scouts	8 Scouts
	male 154
	female 7
	Venture Scouts- male 12
	female 8
Leaders	41 Leaders
	74

...**In June 1936** and September 1938, galas and jamboreas were held on the Arena to raise funds for DHQ which was opened at 141 Icknield Way in March 1937, at a cost of £750.

...**Seventh Letchworth** (St Thomas a Becket, later St Thomas of Canterbury) started by Group Scoutmaster Rev. HG Herrington in 1938 is still going.

...**Letchworth District HQ** was requisitioned by the Army from 1939 to 1946. First, Third and Sixth Scouts met in St George's Hall. Wolf Cubs at Pixmore School.

...Miss **Beatrice Gore-Harvey** was Cubmaster and Scoutmaster for the new Second Letchworth (St Nicholas') registered in 1941. Renamed St George's in 1964, the group closed in 1976.

...**A District Rover Crew** re-opened in May 1946 with Jim Northover as Leader. With 'service' as their motto, they established a newsletter for Letchworth & Baldock District in June 1959, to help different groups to avoid dates clashing when planning their events. Rover Scout Arundel Hoyer suggested that the title could be 'CO-ORDINATOR'.

...**In 1966**, Senior Scouts and Rover Scouts into a new section for men from 16 to 19, to be called Venture Scouts. And Venture Scouting WORKS!!

...**Champion Hills VSU** was formed on 28 July 1968, and remains one of the longest continuously running units in the United Kingdom.

...**Beech Springs VSU** opened on 15 September 1977 and continues to flourish.

...**Eleventh Letchworth VSU**, later renamed Bacchus, was inaugurated on 15 April 1987.

...**Eighth Letchworth Wolf Cubs** began on Friday 13 January 1961. A Beaver colony arrived in 1987.

...**Wolf Cubs** became Cub Scouts (and boy Scouts became Scouts) in 1966. Cubmasters and Scoutmasters all turned into Leaders!!

...**First Baldock** sold their Clothall Road HQ in 1938 and met in the White Horse Pavilion till September 1940. Then the Curlews and Hawks met in the Rover den behind the Manor House.

...**Tenth Letchworth** began with Cub Scouts in October 1971, and a Scout troop was formed in January 1973; but unfortunately the group folded in 1988.

...**Eleventh Letchworth** began at Pixmore School in June 1978 with Cub Scouts.

...**Twelfth Letchworth** was formed in 1981 as the 'overspill' of Fourth Letchworth's Grenadier Cub Scout pack, and Scouts were soon added to the group.

...**Back in 1923**, a Wolf Cub pack was started by the Reverend Mother at St Joseph's Convent in Baldock, but this Second Baldock group did not last. Sponsored by Father William Ruhman, it came to life again in 1953 and continues as our only Catholic Scout group.

...**Second Letchworth**, defunct from 1933, was revived in 1940 for wartime evacuees from Bexhill, and run by Guiders, Miss I Cummings and Miss I Cheater.

Scouting Today

Who are the District Venture Scouts?

They consist of three units: Bacchus, Beech Springs and Champion Hills.

So what do they do?

Although each unit has a natural individuality born out of self determination which derives from the unit organisation, venture activities common to all three are predominately of a physically challenging nature. A typical evening program might be one of mountain biking, indoor climbing or even testing aircraft escape systems;



whilst sessions devoted to evaluating and planning programmes and expeditions provides exercise for other parts of the body!

In addition to individual programmes our three are 'getting together' in December '94 at Orchard Farm for a training weekend I understand! The units strive to make themselves known across the County, participating in Peak Assault, Chambers Pot, Gilwell Gathering and other County initiatives.

Cub Scouts

Currently we have 12 Cub packs. District events, include sixers and seconders training weekend, six-aside football tournaments, general knowledge quiz, Sports Day and the highlight of the year our District Camp attended by over 120 Cubs. The Cub Scout programme has changed over the last three years from the Arrow Awards to the Adventure and Adventure Crest Awards, the new programme encompasses many of the popular activities from the arrow scheme but includes many new exciting challenges.

Scouts

What is the difference between 400 and 04.00 ? Just a O and a '. Recently over sixty scouts took part in a night hike where one of the checkpoints involved playing French Boules (organised by a Venture Scout Unit) between 0.00 and 04.00 hrs on a Sunday morning underneath the A1(M) (where else!!!).

The Scout section remains buoyant despite the change of time - from £sd to £p, feet and inches to metres, and of course girls into scouts, who would have thought that two decades ago.

Time comes and goes but Scouting remains to give boys and girls an important step in growing up, no matter what race or creed. I look forward to bringing Scouts and leaders together for what I believe remains the greatest youth organisation in the world.

District Scout Competitions at planning stage:-

Cyclocross (start building the mean machines now!) and 'JMT' (Jim's Mystery Tour).

Beaver Scouts

Since the first Co-ordinator, the introduction of Beaver Scouts must have been the biggest change in Scouting. It all started in this district about eight years ago (I'm not sure of the exact date) at 4th Letchworth, with a colony at 12th Letchworth starting shortly afterwards. Beaver Scout numbers have continued to grow and now we have eight colonies in the District. During the year we have two district competitions: the Beaver Scout Challenge and Sports Day. We also have a District day out and Sports Day. We also have a District day out and our rather oddly named "Beavers, Bangers and Bash" - a camp fire get together with hot dogs. The Beavers enthusiasm makes all these events tremendous fun, even though the British weather frequently tries to put a dampener on them!

In addition to these events Beavers "happen" on a weekly basis thanks to the dedication of all our leaders. Looking to the future, I thought about what might be reported in issue 500 - it dawned on me that we will actually be "Beavering" for boys (and girls maybe) that are not yet born! - Beaver Scouting will have changed by then, I'm sure - but not too much, I hope!

Scouting Abroad

One of our founder's great visions was that Scouting could become a force for peace among young people. Scouting has constantly opened new and challenging horizons to young people through programmes which help them to discover more about themselves, their relation with the natural world and with their fellow human beings.

Nowhere is this seen more clearly than at the World Jamborees where Scouts from all over the globe from many different cultures, religions and political backgrounds join together in harmony united by the common bond of Scouting. In 1995 our District will be represented by four Scouts at the 18th World Jamboree in Holland. In past years Jamborees have been held as far apart as Canada, Australia and Korea. Apart from the Jamboree itself, there is also a period of borne hospitality with a Scouting family. Jamborees make a lasting impression on the Scouts as a few quotations from the Australian Jamboree illustrate.

'Australia is a fantastic place. It has everything going for it. Space to breathe, but huge cities and industries, fun-loving, hard-working people who are never down for long.'

A Norwegian female Scout leader in her broken English summed it up "Isn't it great to be a Scout!"

Europe is well known to our Venture Scouts where they have scaled mountain peaks in Norway, Poland, Austria, France and Spain. Champion Hills even did their bit towards the downfall of the Berlin Wall!

Last year, 1st Baldock Scouts visited Russia and this year they were joined at their annual camp by Scouts from St Petersburg.

In all our adventures we have not forgotten Scouts in other parts of the World as we raise funds for Unite. We have contributed towards Jamboree fees for Scouts from poorer countries and we have sent equipment to Russia.

Letchworth and Baldock Scout Shop and Guide Supplies

The shop was the brain child of Eric Oldham who was the Chairman of the District Badge Committee. He obtained Scout uniform by mail order as required and was assisted by Mrs Skelton and Mrs Watson.

In February 1968 the shop proper was launched in a room at the rear of the Council of Social Services in Gemon Road. **August 1968 saw the** introduction of Guide and Brownie Handbooks and a small amount of Guide and Brownie uniform. All stock was stored in boxes on shelves and metal racks and the 'changing room' was a Victorian screen! Mrs Foster and Mrs Eaves were regular helpers at this point.

In January 1971, the annual turnover was £1720, but the shop was stocking an ever wider range of goods (books and uniform mostly) which meant it eventually outgrew the room in Gemon Road. It was moved to the 1/3 HQ during 1977 and was allocated two small storage rooms. The turnover at the end of 1977 was slightly less than £5,000 and the shop had become an official agent for Scout Association, Guide Association, Clayton and Scoutaids.

Sadly, it was during 1977 that Eric Oldham became ill, which led to Ruth and Peter volunteering(!) to take over in January 1978.

With a larger clientele and the need to stock larger quantities of uniforms etc. the 1/3 Hall was ideal. The wares could be spread out and customers circulated as in a supermarket - indeed, there were even wire baskets available!

In 1984 the County Council allowed us an 'Established Facility' and so we were able to stock and sell all the stationary etc. available to the Education Service, this was a very popular innovation. The shop was now open 2 hours per session.

The last session in 1/3 Hall was in July 1989 and the momentous event in September 1989 was the opening of the new purpose built premises attached to the rear of the 1/3 Hall. This has enabled the trading to grow to its present level. Both Scouters and Guiders are now able to purchase their badges actually in the shop, instead of visiting private homes.

The shop could not have functioned had it not been for the regular help of members of Trefoil Guild, Scout Fellowship, active Guiders, Scouters, Guides and Scouts. The latest trading turnover was over £34,000. Eric Oldham would have been amazed!

Letchworth and Baldock Gang Show 1955-94

It didn't just start in 1955, - it really started the year before, when the District Commissioner Mr A T Hodgson was invited to see a Group Show, and what he saw didn't impress him at all!

It was then that a group of Scouters, Ernie Cardwell, David Beech, Les Collins and Fred Cogar decided to put on a District Show in 1955 called *Our Show*, so 46 intrepid young men - Wolf Cubs, Scouts, Senior Scouts and Scouters 'trod the boards' many for the very first time.

Mrs Sheila Reindorp was our pianist, the producer was Fred Cogar, the Director, Ernie Cardwell and the stage managers were Les Collins and Eric James. Lighting by Mr Spriggs, - wardrobe by Mrs Kelt and Mrs James and make up by Miss Thorn.

Rehearsals were held at the District HQ (now 1/3 HQ) in Icknield Way and for the production team there were many problems to be ironed out.

The venue was the Co-Op Hall in Eastcheap; no lighting in situ, but at least we had a piano. Ralph Reader, the London GS producer, gave permission for us to use any of his material (this was later extended to



all groups who wanted to put on a show). There was one condition however, to give any local show the name *Gang Show*, it had to contain 80% of Ralph's material (this has lately been rescinded). As we wished to include some of our own local material, we named it 'Our Show 1955'.

Our spotlights were 71b Baked bean tins, and our footlights were bulbs fixed into square biscuit tins and coloured cellophane add a touch of glamour. Our scenery was all made from cardboard and hand painted (from the audience, it was surprising how effective it could be).

Tickets were 2/6d front seats or 1/6d further back and we had a sell-out for both nights of the show.

Norton Bury Scout and Guide Activity Centre

The Farm House as it stands was built in about 1877, but the signs are that a building stood there in Saxon times. "Bury" means a place with a moat or fence round it, a moat can still be seen which proves Norton Bury to be the site of a very old house.

In 1963 Letchworth Garden City Corporation took it over and later when it stood empty the Corporation leased it to Letchworth and Baldock District Scouts and Guides. It is a centre open throughout the year to members of the Scout and Guide movement, other Youth Organisations and Schools.

The House is equipped to accommodate groups of up to forty people and the grounds include two camp sites, an assault course, canoeing facilities and a newly constructed Chapel.

The House and grounds are used for training, competitions and meetings as well as pack holidays and camps.

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