

BOY SCOUTS – 2ND S.W. HERTS (2ND OXHEY) SCOUT GROUP

This Troop was registered in 1913 but we were told it started in 1909. A group of boys used to meet at the Parish Hall in Lower Paddock Road to do drill and we understood they became 1st Oxhey Troop under a Mr. E Jones. Mr. E.W. Sargent, who lived in Oxhey Avenue, became Secretary of the newly formed 'Association'.

2nd Oxhey Troop was formed by a group of boys who disagreed with 1st Oxhey policy. Most came from Carpenders Park. The Reverend A. Davies became Scoutmaster with a Mr. A Cooper as Assistant Scoutmaster. Mr Cooper eventually became Scoutmaster in 1928. The above history was taught us as Boy Scouts but we never saw anything written down.

In Oxhey Avenue on the 'even' side lived the Bone family. Alan was at Watford Grammar School – fair-haired, stocky and mad on Rugby. He was a Patrol Leader in 2nd Oxhey Troop, and his sister, Frances Bone was Cub mistress. In 1937, Frances took my brother Mick and myself (David) as Cubs, although we were under age as I believe we had to be 7 or 8 years old before acceptance. Miss Bone was Akhala, and there was an assistant called 'Bagheera' the Panther, but I cannot recall her name. We loved the whole thing – it was exciting and new. As the only children in Oxhey Avenue it meant we met other children.

Miss Bone was very strict on discipline and hygiene. Necks and fingernails had to be very clean. Uniforms: ironed by ourselves and creased to perfection. We were taught the 'Flag', Lords Prayer, ironing, washing, read Kipling's 'Kim' and 'Just So' stories, played games and went on adventure hikes. The Cubmistress wore a Khaki tunic and skirt with a leather belt, a whistle on a lanyard and a wide brimmed Scout Hat. Miss Bone shone with cleanliness and her shoes would have done credit to the Brigade of Guards.

I remember the long walk down Oxhey Lane to the Scout Hut, opposite the Lodge to the big house we called Absalom's. The Hut (is it still there?) had creosoted wood plank walls and a felt covered roof. The doors were green and the hut sat in a small area enclosed by an iron fence. I think there were Scots Pines around. To one side was a number of cottages and a yard. There was a brick shed, where we kept equipment and a Trek cart. The Hut was painted cream inside with gold radiators, run on gas. The lighting was also gas. There was no water or lavatory. At the back was a small room and an office.

I believe we 'went up' to Scouts when eleven. Our uniform was dark green jersey, brown shorts (if possible), Fawn neckerchief with woggle (home made), khaki socks with green tabs or black if unobtainable, black shoes and the famous BP scout hat.

Mr F Holloway (known as Grey Brother) had been Scoutmaster but left to join the Royal Artillery. We had no Adults in 1941/2 but the Troop leader was a lad called 'OXO' Moxom who was a splendid chap. We had two patrols 'Owls' and 'Curlews' (later Wolves and Stags) and later a third – the 'Ravens'. I was an Owl. Most of the boys came from Carpenders Park or Oxhey. I remember Jimmy Ferris who later joined the RAF Gang Show; the two Prior boys from somewhere down Hampermill Lane way; David and Roger Croft from Oxhey, whose mother I think was a widow; Tony Mallam, whose mother kept a hairdressers on Clay Hill Bushey; later, David Lloyd who became great friends with my brother Mick after I left. Oh yes, I almost forgot 'Tubby' Hauslitch (I think that was how you spelt his name) an Austrian Jewish refugee. He was older than us, taller and decidedly fatter! Did he go into journalism in London?