

Early Days in Llandudno

Llandudno Local Association formed April 1910. Merged into Conwy County 1999.

Known District Commissioners. J.C.Parke at 1935. H.W. Gregory at 1947.

B.Allport:- 1958?-19???. W. Hooson: - 19??-1966. Norman Collins: - 23.8.1967-1.10.1977.

Brian Goldsmith: - 1977-1978. S.Littlewood:- 1978-1980. N. Brookes: - 1980-1992

J. Hammond: - 1992-1998

1st Llandudno and 2nd Llandudno(St Georges) and the Orme Scout Group

The 1st Llandudno Scouts were formed by 1909 and “had a bugle band “ by 1911. It appears that the troop closed soon after the outbreak of war in 1914. The 2nd Llandudno Scouts started not long after the war finished and certainly by the early 1920’s largely due to family members of the original 1st Llandudno. Later, the 1st was restarted and at various times over the next 50 years both experienced highs and lows. On the 21/10/1974 both scout troops amalgamated and formed the 1st/2nd Llandudno Scout Group but the two Cub Packs remained in existence with boys from both cub packs going into the one scout troop. This arrangement lasted until July 1985 when the 1st and 2nd Llandudno reverted to their former independence and once again we had a 1st and 2nd Llandudno scout group. The current Orme Scout Group came about when both groups once again merged and this time created a new identity for themselves and based their name on the Great Orme under whose shadow their headquarters stood. Notes from Mr. Roberts of Llandudno refers to the 1st Llandudno as being sea scouts in the 1930’s wearing navy jerseys with “Sea Scouts” in white across the chest, their neckerchiefs being blue and white. At the same time he remembers the 2nd Llandudno St.George’s, having green shirts with red and green neckerchiefs.

Little is known of the early days of scouting in Llandudno as no written records have been found. However, thanks to Mrs. Pat Schilling of Penrhyn Bay, we have had access to photographs of 1st Llandudno scouts from the 1911-1913 period and these illustrate well the style of uniform and activities that represent the period. The best illustration has to be a half- life-size pastel drawing of Mrs Shilling’s father Frank Thomas in full scout uniform and carrying a bugle.

Mrs Schilling has also provided a tape recording of her auntie’s memories of the early days of the 2nd Llandudno along with several photographs of that troop.

It is worthy of note that the family of Frank Thomas play a significant role in the development of scouting in Llandudno. We believe that the 1st Llandudno troop closed for the duration of the First World War and soon afterwards, Frank’s younger brother, George, wanted to become a boy scout but there were no scouts in Llandudno at that time. His solution was to become a lone scout. He found that learning the scout test work on his own proved difficult so his older sister, Dorothy, became involved in helping him and very quickly other boys joined in and this led to the formation of the 2nd Llandudno (St. George’s Scout Troop) with his sister, Dorothy Thomas, becoming the Scoutmaster. It is of interest to note that Miss Thomas was one of the first Lady Scoutmasters in Wales and one of the earliest leaders to gain the Adult Leader Training Award (Wood Badge) and also represented the area at the first meeting of the Welsh Scout Council in Llandrindod Wells in 1925.

The only other references we have to these earliest days in Llandudno are from the notes of Mr Norman Tuckers “Scout History” of Colwyn Bay.....

Midsummer 1909.

“Half a dozen enthusiasts decided to keep the troop alive and met in the rear of the premises of Mr. J. Wallis, Station Road. His eldest son, W. Wallis, was Patrol Leader of the Owls. I being the biggest boy, acted as unofficial leader. **Our numbers grew and we arranged to join the Llandudno troop under Scoutmaster A.E. Cooper**, until our own Movement could be reorganised. It was our practice to march to Llandudno, go scouting on the Great Orme or at West Shore (then a remote spot) and march home at night. In time this proved too severe a strain”

January 1911.

“That month, Mr. Eric G.S. Walker of Headquarters came to Colwyn Bay, met the local Scouts at the Council Chamber, and addressed a public meeting. Schoolmasters were invited. A lantern lecture was given at Rhiw Road on 21 January. Local Scouts were joined by troops from Conway and Abergele, **whilst the 1st Llandudno sent their bugle band to head the parade through the town.**”



Frank Thomas 1st Llandudno 1911.

Extract from a letter held in the Welsh Scout H.Q. and dated Dec 1993.

In 1930/31 it was decided to form a new scout group meeting at St. David's Church schoolroom in Craig-y-Don, Llandudno. At that time I remember that **the 1st Llandudno** were Sea Scouts wearing navy jersey with SEA SCOUTS in white across the chest. Their scarves were blue and white. **The 2nd Llandudno**, St Georges, wore green jerseys and their scarves were red and green. *I regret I cannot remember anything of the 3rd Llandudno.*

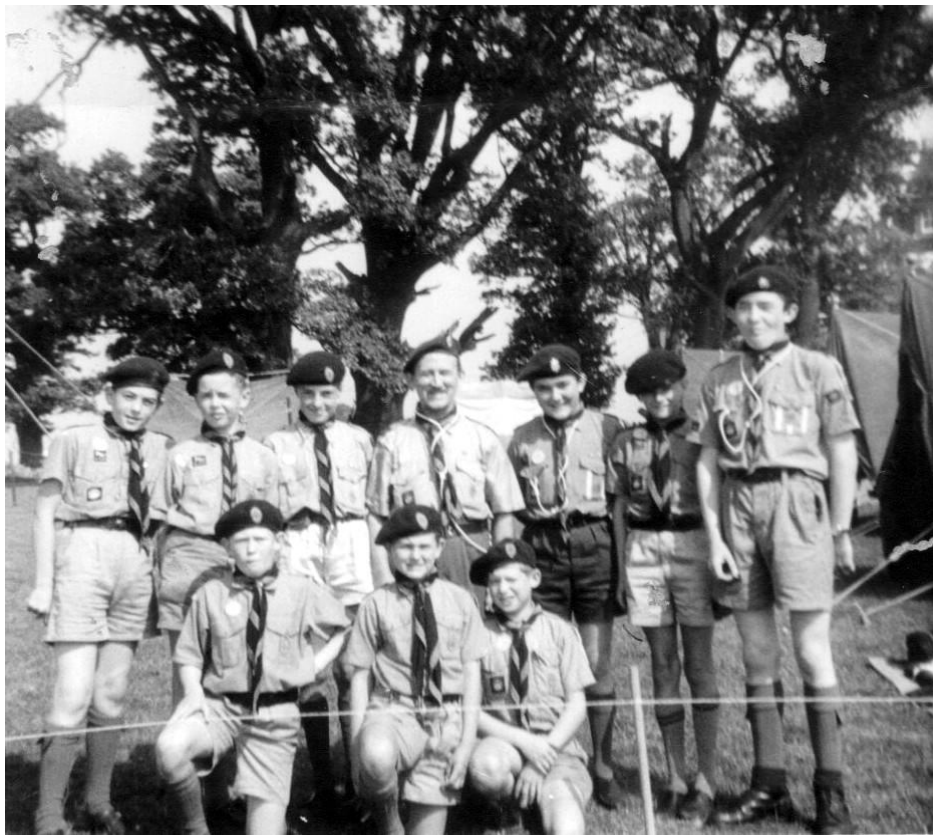
1st Llandudno (St.Pauls?) Sea Scouts. May Day 1929.



1st Llandudno. 2nd Welsh Jamboree Haverfordwest 1952



1st Llandudno. 5th Welsh Jamboree Ruabon 1965



1st Llandudno 11th Welsh Jamboree Margam Park 1989



Opening of the Scout Headquarters 1975



2nd Llandudno - St. George's Scout Group

Transcript of a tape recording by Mrs Dorothy (Dot) Cotgrave nee Thomas

Well, I'll begin at the very beginning. It was all because of my youngest brother, George, wanting to be a Boy Scout and there just weren't any Boy Scouts in Llandudno. I don't think there were any in Colwyn Bay or Conwy or anywhere, there just weren't any Boy Scouts about. So information came to us that he could become what was called a Lone Scout which meant that he had a book of a the laws and the crafts and the object of scouting as created by Lord Baden Powell. He would swot it up and try to learn all these things on his own and once a month a man called Mr. Samuels who was a Scouter, an elderly man or a middle aged man, from Llanfairfechan came to see him but it was a very boring way of learning a very interesting occupation. As far as I can remember this was about 1924. - George would be about 11 or 12 so I volunteered to help him. There was another boy called Elfin Evans, of George's age, who lived half way up Nant y Gammar Road in a cottage opposite an old lime kiln. I mention this lime kiln because we took possession of it. It was in a shocking state there were nettles waist high and there were large lumps of rock that had come there from the lime stone quarry nearby. We cleared this all away and we used some of the bigger rocks to sit on as seats and this was our headquarters. Incidentally there was no roof on it of any sort whatsoever just the open sky above use so if the weather was bad - no troop meeting - because it was raining and not even a scout hat would have kept us dry.

And then it was a Miss Dunphy who - people who have lived many years past would know of very well indeed. Dunphy's corner in Craig y Don and Dunphy's shop at the top of Mostyn Street. Miss Dunphy decided she would like to start a pack of cubs. So she collected a group of these small boys and they were attached to us. She also found out that we could get the use of St. George's school in Church Walks - a big room that could be used in the evening free of charge so we removed ourselves to Church Walks. It was a little bit far for us from Craig y Don, but we all had bikes and it was grand to have a big room, cupboards that we could use to keep our equipment in and no charge made. By then we must have had about 10 boys, really and truly, boys kept coming to me and saying please can I join. So we moved up to Church Walks and in a very short time we had 3 regular patrols, that is, 8 boys, 7 boys and a patrol leader.

We had 3 patrols that competed one against each other which made them more enthusiastic about coming out tops. We didn't just stay there each time we went up there for the evening. We would meet there and we would call the roll call of the boys that were there and find out any fresh information that needed to be passed from scout to scout. Then we went out on to the sand-hills on the West Shore which was a really happy hunting ground. There were all-sorts of things we could do there. We would light a fire, which I am sure you wouldn't dare to do today, and we would cook sausages, roast potatoes in their jackets, boil water for a cup of hot tea, taking all the necessary food with us of course. Then we would get down to perhaps learning to tie knots, which is always the basic training for a boy scout - to be able to tie a reef knot that won't slip. Even to-day I find that it is a wonderful accomplishment because I am affiliated with a group who knit blankets for poor people and the wool has to be joined. When you come to the end of the ball you must join on a fresh ball and if you use a granny knot it comes undone and you drop a stitch and the blanket is spoilt. I find that very few ladies know how to join with a reef knot which is firm and tight for ever, so that was all due to my scouting experience of many, many years ago.

I was always very firm that we were not a badge hunting troop because boys, and those in charge of them, are very inclined to do this for the glory of the group but it is not a very wise way of obtaining knowledge. Knowledge should be gathered together with a real purpose for its use, as knowledge is to be used and not to just produce a badge.

So I was always very sure that, whenever boy said I would like to try this particular badge next, - I would find if he really was interested in that particular type of work, interest, or knowledge or whatever it was, before I gave him any encouragement to proceed with gathering the knowledge to win the badge.

Interviewer asks 'Do you remember any of the boy's names'

Well, I can hardly say that I remember them except they have been brought to mind by looking through some of my old photographic albums. I came across two photographs taken on the West Shore sand hills with the names of all the boys on the photographs, so here are some of them, there may be relatives in the town who recognise them.....

Tom Roberts, Fred Wisebeck, Willie Steen, Fred Appleby, Kenneth Harding and Fred Shortage. Also, John and Arthur Flaharty - I remember them very well - they really became very friendly with my brother George. As they grew older they became friendly and used to go up and spend evenings with the family especially one of the girls - Alice Flaherty. They lived half way up the Orme and George and Ally (Alice) became very good friends - nothing further.

Billy Williams, he lived in Craig y Don, Eric Tomlinson and later on I got an adult - Arthur Gregory. I can't remember at all any background on him but he became an assistant scoutmaster and took charge of the ranger boys - over 16 (Rover Scouts?) of which we had quite a number joined us. He was an assistant and Agatha Williams who was the sister of Billy Williams living in Craig y Don - she became our cub master. So everybody was very enthusiastic, and they worked hard and well and they were very loyal. In a very short time we became the crack troop in Caernarfonshire.

We went to very many meetings - what would you call them in those days - they wouldn't be conferences - gathering of scouts and tests being given them to find out who were the best. The majority of things we came out top in. I must relate one sad incident at Conwy, I think it was Conwy. We went to one of these test matches and the subject was medical work, and first aid and our particular boys were given a man with a broken leg - badly broken. They had to put it into splints and bandage it in the correct manner which they did very well indeed but when the judges came along they found to their great amusement that the boys had bandaged the wrong leg so that put paid to that particular item. In the end we came out tops, it was interesting.

In 1926, Edward the Prince of Wales, who later married Mrs. Simpson, came on a visit to Llandudno and the Llandudno people welcomed him very, very enthusiastically. They made great preparations before his arrival, there were two grand arches of triumph, one on the Conwy road where the Prince would enter the town and another one on the top of Nant y Gammer Road by the promenade, where he would roughly leave Llandudno town. These triumph arches were made out of lattice wood and covered profusely with the most beautiful white chrysanthemums, even to this day the smell of freshly cut chrysanthemums brings my mind back immediately to these triumph arches, and the prince came along and inspected our troop and to my delight I, myself was presented to him and had the honour of shaking hands with him.



Scout Guard of Honour for the visit to Llandudno by Edward Prince of Wales 1926

There is just one more little item that is really very interesting - probably the year before - 1926 - there were quite a large group of scouters from Australia came over to England and some of them came over to Llandudno. And we acted as hosts to them and took them over to various points of interest in Conwy and in Llandudno and then one day we went out as far as Dolgarrog and went up the mountainside in the open railway trucks which were used for business, going up to Llyn Cowlyd, I think that is where the water came from. They were just open trucks like cattle trucks and the incline was terrifically steep and you really felt a little bit nervous as you looked down below to see to river and the town.

Then as a grand finale to all this account of scouting, in 1926 we were up in a field, in the neighbourhood of where the present Llandudno hospital is, and most of the troop was out there and we were just playing about - mucking about as they said in those days and we saw a group of scouters coming up from the road down below. They came right along to us and made themselves known, they were a small group of ranger scouts (rover scouts) from Wallasey.

The man in charge was named Alan, and we came to know each other very well and eventually in 1927 we were married. We were both very keen scouters and my troop was a grand guard of honour at the wedding and made an archway of crossed staves as we came out - crossed staves over our heads - they don't carry staves nowadays - it always seems a pity to me as we found them very useful - useful for all sorts of things



Wedding of Rover Scout Robert Alan Cotgrave and Scout Leader, Dorothy (Dot) Thomas in 1927

There follows a narration regarding the Dolgarrog disaster.

The Orme Scout Group

No information received.