

1960's commentary - 12th Portobello (RHS) Scout Group

The 1960's started in much the same way as the previous decades, with much emphasis on outdoor scouting, but finished on a sad note in 1968 as the school relocated to Barnton, announcing the start of the dislocation between school and Portobello Scouts. The primary source for the decade commentaries until 1964 was Schola Regia, until the production of the *Twelfth magazine* commenced, which then proved a good source of information. Extracts from the *Twelfth* are included at the end of this article.

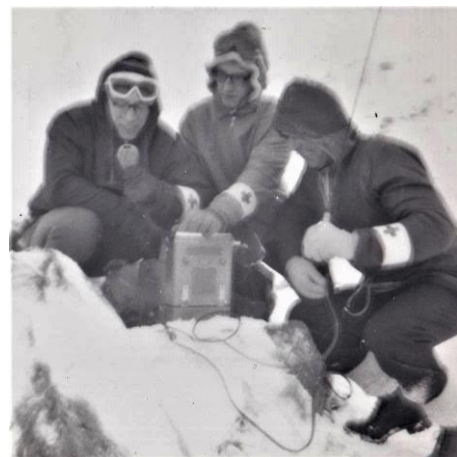
The decade was launched with the usual round of fundraising activities, including Jumble Sales and Bring and Buy events, and a performance of the Group's gang show – 'Smiling Along'. Two new activities were announced – skiing and canoeing, the former with blizzards, broken limbs and assorted equipment losses. One canoe was bought from a Gorgie Rover Crew, while Eric Sprigg was reportedly building his own one. Eighteen 12th Portobello Cubs performed in the County show 'Cub Capers' which included a display from the now politically incorrect 'Australian Blackfellows'. The Christmas edition of schola Regia advised that the Troop had won the District Shield for a fourth consecutive time. The summer camp (affected to some extent by water-borne food poisoning) was held at Coulston near Gifford, but the running of the troop had to be undertaken without Scoutmaster Derek Addison. Queens Scout Awards were presented to Eric Sprigg, Walter Thomson and Gordon McConnachie (see photo above right).



In early 1961, Ian Hutchison, who had been Rover Scout Leader (RSL) since the unit's inception in 1958 had to retire, and Peter Blythe, a former Assistant Scout Leader took over as RSL. The crew numbered twelve, and joint meetings were held with Rangers (the Girl Guides equivalent). Weekend skiing trips to Glenshee were becoming frequent, the Cubs had their picnic at Longniddry, and Mid-Tartraven in West Lothian was selected as the Summer Camp site. The Group's 30th Anniversary dinner was held in the Overseas House on 31st May. Scout hiking trips included one memorable adventure in East Lothian celebrated with a finely crafted group

photograph arranged around a five-bar farm gate and traditional 'dry stane' dyke (photo above left). The troop once again won the District Shield, making five in a row. Miss Munro retired as Assistant Cubmaster, but Eric Sprigg was in the meantime taking steps towards obtaining a Cub Scout warrant.

1962 saw twins Alec and Andrew Anderson, along with Graeme Saunders providing help with running the cubs. Just to demonstrate that it wasn't all about badges, the troop's regular successes in the district shield were augmented by wins in the district football and sports events. The first mentions were made of the cottage at Lauder, 'Drummond's Hall' to be exact, with much restoration by the Rover Crew, but also usage by the Scouts. The summer camp site was announced as Ruchlaw mains near Stenton in East Lothian, and Derek Addison was announced as the leader of the new Senior Patrol. The sea scouts camped at Kailzie, near Peebles. Both the Cubs and Scouts won the district swimming trophies, with thanks being expressed to Dougie Mitchell and his school PE staff. Assistant Cubmaster Andrew Anderson was presented with his Queen's Scout award. 1963 camps were held at Greenlaw for the scouts, with the sea scouts at Edinample near Lochearnhead. Rover Scouts participated in the Glenshee rescue service (see above right – Sprigg, McConnachie and Blythe fighting the new short-wave radio technology) for several years, with humorous anecdotes concerning the Group's Dormobile including such as having to change a wheel while crossing the ferry at Queensferry, and stopping to collect a window (and a door) that had fallen out in transit. 1964 saw the Sea



R.H.S. Scout Group Presentation Dinner to Miss A. H. Hamilton, M.A.



Mr J. P. SMALL, Group Scoutmaster; THE RECTOR; MISS HAMILTON; Mr H. R. S. THOMPSON, Chairman of Group Committee.

Scouts reporting that the troop strength was 31. Several activities throughout Scotland were undertaken, and the troop's objective was to gain Admiralty recognition, meaning that they could borrow equipment from the Navy. Scoutmasters Rob Lawrie and Walter Thomson were thanked for their continuing efforts. In early 1964, the Land Scouts announced the institution of 'Operation Albatross', a weekend of mixed Scouting activities for older scouts conducted over extensive distances in East Lothian. The event was repeated the next year at Mount Lothian near Penicuik, one patrol reportedly becoming lost during the exercise! The seismic news in July 1965 was the retirement of Akela Miss Hamilton after thirty-four years of service. Her awards during this period included the medal of merit in 1947, the Wood badge in

1950, the achievement of attending all three Cub Indabas, and her presentation to the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh at the school's 1958 royal visit. The annual scout camp was at Hedderwick Hill, on the banks of the river Tyne, just to the west of Dunbar. High tide saw some of the patrol camp sites under water! The sea scouts joined the Scottish National Sea Scout Camp at Dunstaffnage.

1965 saw the Sea Scout complement reaching 45, necessitating the creation of a senior patrol. Their camp was held at Dunstaffnage near Oban, where Twelfth Knight performed creditably in the sailing races against much larger vessels. The Cubs celebrated their golden jubilee, fifty years since their inception in 1916, and



were looking forward to the visit of the Chief Scout in the autumn. The 1966 scout camp was held at Penpont in Dumfriesshire, the first of two visits to the same site. The photo above right shows many scouts and leaders on one of their jaunts up the splendidly named *Tynron Doon*, a near-1000 feet 'multivallate hillfort', with a centuries old story of its being a



supposed haunt for a headless horseman. The sea scout camp was held at Craighlugh Lodge, Easter Dunkeld,

1967 saw George Mitchell being presented with his Queen's Scout award, and outdoor activities included many skiing trips to Glenshee. The annual camp was held at Langholm where canoes were much in evidence.

The photo above left shows the extensive nature of the two-troop camp (Land and Sea Scouts) in 1968 at Ringower on the west side of Loch Ken in Dumfriesshire, taken during what looks like a very busy Parents' Day.

Activities included hiking, abseiling, boating and canoeing. The 'Camping Standards' camp personnel log on the right shows both sea and land scout leaders and troops, with many of the Scouters attending in an honorary capacity, as was the habit latterly.

1969 once again saw a joint camp, this time at Borenich farm on the south side of Loch Tummel, the location of the scouts 1964 camp. October saw Operation Albatross in Saltoun forest, and plans for the following year included more activities at Lauder cottage, with the summer camp at Kenervie farm on the east side of Loch Ken. Gordon McConnachie left for an assignment in Saudi Arabia, leaving Alastair Allanach with the (un)-enviable task of managing the scout troop virtually on his own. (Thankfully, Gordon was to return after just one year...)

The Twelfth magazine 1960's entries

The February 1964 first edition. In his editorial, Gordon McConnachie briefly mentioned the importance of Group communications and the part this magazine would play. It was hope to achieve four publications a year. Comprehensive reports were provided by the Parents Committee (Hugh Thomson), The Cubs (Miss Hamilton), The Scouts (Gordon McConnachie) the Sea Scouts (Rob Lawrie), and the Rover Scouts (Peter Blythe). The two remaining issues in 1964 (June and October) followed up the programme schedules of the first edition, but additional reports included:

1. The June 'Summer Fair', opened by the US Consul and featuring the school pipe band
2. The Chief Scouts rally at Myreside
3. Sea Scout 'Navy Days' at Faslane on HMS Maidstone, and also at Rosyth
4. The Scout camp at Loch Tummel (Scouts and Sea Scouts at the same site)
5. The Portobello District Sports, won by the Scouts!
6. Operation Albatross
7. Maintenance programmes at Lauder cottage.

1965 Editions

It soon became apparent that four editions per year was a difficult target, and this year saw two editions in June and December. Aside the now usual five 'departmental' reports, there were features on the following:

1. Miss Hamilton's retiral
2. Skiing trips
3. Lauder cottage plumbing
4. The Cub Scouts (with Eric Sprigg) attend the gang Show
5. Scout car Races - with the very modern caveat that cost was limited to £10, and that the fuel be human energy
6. The first Scottish National Sea Scout Camp at Dunstaffanage – 400 attended

1966 and 1967 Editions

Each of these years had a single edition, which were however packed with information. Features included:

1. The Cub Jubilee year service in the Usher Hall attended by Chief Scout Sir Charles Maclean
2. Canoeing and Skiing reports
3. The Sea Scouts become Admiralty Recognised
4. Scout Group name changes, Badge changes and new uniform pricing (long trousers at 50 shillings!)

1968 and 1969 Editions

Once again, each of these years had a single edition.

1. The end of Tower Street – sold to the 'Corporation' in November 1968 for £2500 (Derek Addison apparently returned briefly to help with the removal to the Prep. School)
2. First Aid training programme proposed
3. Summer Camp at Loch Ken shared by Sea Scouts and Scouts