

AN EARLY HISTORY

of the

50th.(1st.) APPLECROSS SCOUT GROUP.

by M.Alan Taylor.

A neighbour of mine, Bernie Barnard and I, after being friends for a number of years discovered that we had both been boy members of the Petersham Scout Group in Sydney at different times. Both of our sons were now approaching Cub age and we thought we would start a Scout troop. We both lived at Como although Bernie had bought some land in Mt. Pleasant, this led to a decision to start our new troop in that just opening up suburb.

A Mr. Honey was secretary for the South Perth District and we obtained information and help from him, this was followed by an interview with the Chief Commissioner, Colonel Wilson, his main concern was to discover whether we might be some dreaded Communists trying to infiltrate the Movement, he paid scant attention to whatever other attributes we might have. Following this we went for a period of training to different troops, Bernie to 120th. South Perth with S.M. Stan Tijou and myself to 20th. South Perth with S.M. Charles Cocks.

The District Commissioner George Ferguson who was also S.M. of Wesley Troop also had an interest in our training. When we were ready to launch the new troop we could not discover any meeting facilities at Mt. Pleasant, however the R.S.L. at Applecross were cooperative and made their hall in Kintail Rd. available for our first meetings. The pending troop scarf then became a topic of debate, Bernie and I had selected a blue scarf which was our old troop Petersham's colour, plus a red border, the colour of apples. The D.C. George Ferguson did not agree, we were to be part of the South Perth District and their background colour for scarves always had been and always would be black, so black it was with a tiny triangle of blue to remember it's mentor Petersham.

Charles Hamilton had now become the new D.C. of South Perth, he was also the principal of Applecross Primary school, this was a great help when the troop was launched in February 1952 as he encouraged boys at his school to join.

The first night was a great success with about a dozen turning up to enrol, one boy was particularly big lad Brian Illingworth plus Davidson became the first troop leaders, amongst the other recruits were Bob Jones, Roger Wardeel-Johnston and others.

The R.S.L. hall was small and limited our activities so Charles Hamilton offered us the use of the school shelter shed, it was not fitted with electric light and well before the meetings started someone would need to spend some time getting the kerosene operated Tilley lamps to work, sometimes frustrating as one of us struggled to get them hot with enough pressure up to light plus being surrounded by arriving boys with questions like, "Will I be able to do one of my second class tests tonight?"

Alan Jones the state secretary discovered that there were a few ££'s and a small amount of gear being held from the defunct Canning Bridge troop, this was passed over to us and helped greatly with getting started.

Meetings in the shelter shed were great fun, games could be held in the school playing area. Even on cold winter nights everybody enjoyed the fun and training. Camps or day long excursions were held every month, one of our favoured campsites was at Bull Creek owned by the District. Entrance was made by a sandy track along what is now Leach Highway, it was better in winter when it was wet and nearly impassible in summer when the hungry dry sand bogged the vehicles down. The site is now covered with luxury homes.

Another favourite camp site was at Wungong Brook a few hundred yards in from the highway, the combination of water, bush and hills were excellent for playing wide games. Gilwell at Kelmscott was also used on some occasions however in the main we preferred the freedom of the other camp sites.

A few months after the troop was started some boys wanted to bring their young brothers, fortuitously Murray Hamilton then appeared and offered his services as Cubmaster, he soon found an assistant, Lila Lewis and the Pack quickly filled up.

Pressure now mounted for the Group to have it's own premises and we set about finding a site, a search of the block map located an unusual block that had been made by poor surveying near Canning Highway, the Shire Council were very cooperative and it was leased on a peppercorn rental for twenty years. A strong parent's committee had been formed chaired by Bob Spargo with support from Charles Cowden and Don Chipper. Funds were raised and a prefabricated farm building was purchased for £1250. This did not include the timber flooring and a levy of threepence a week was made on the weekly subscriptions to purchase this material, Bert Negus at Bunnings managed to get us the flooring at a reduced price providing we took delivery straight away. This huge load of timber was then stored out of the weather in the partly built hall, what problems it caused as we continually shuffled it around to gain access to whatever other part of the construction that was in hand at the time.

Bricks were needed for the floor piers and the toilet block. A spate of house building was going on in the area and it was thought that their would be surplus bricks on the housing sites so we had a brick drive, calls were made and sufficient bricks were donated for our purpose.

Alan Eddy who owned the local hardware store helped locate some of the material that was needed and many other fathers contributed time and money.

There was a good roll up at the commencement of construction, however by the time we were ready to lay the flooring the initial enthusiasm had waned. Bob Spargo came up with a bright idea to bring our labour force back to the job, he put on a five gallon keg of beer! Nevertheless floor laying flagged although at times it took off without our knowledge, then we discovered that the men of the Congregational Church were coming to the hall at night and laying some of the timbers.

As soon as we were able the troop and pack moved into their new premises without the place ever having an official opening ceremony. With a growing boy population it was soon being used to capacity.

After a while I moved to the newly created job of South Metro Area commissioner and Len Mortlock became G.S.M. for a short time to be followed by an English migrant Bill Allen, whose family also filled many other jobs in the Applecross Group.

May this Group which has touched on so many young lives continue to serve the youth of the future.

LIST OF ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THE APPLECROSS SCOUT GROUP.1951.

As recalled in 1989.

SCOUTERS:

S.M.Alan Taylor.

A.S.M.Bernie Barnard.

A.S.M.Charles Goodridge.

C.M.Murray Hamilton.

A.C.M.Lila Lewis.

COMMITTEE.

Spargo Robert.

Cowden Charles.

Verrall Reg.

SCOUTS.

Illingworth Brian.

Reynolds Chris.

Benbow William.

Wardell-Johnson Roger.

Spargo Ron.

Verrall

Davidson

Baker

Gilbert John.

Harris

Jones Robert.

Oates Tony.

Ovenden John.

LATER ON.

Briggs Maitland.

Tippett Colin.

Visser Hain.

Gaton Bill.

Davies Brian.

Little John.

Gwynne Ken.

Leggatt Tony.

Matheson Colin.

Critch Ken.

Trigg Terry.

Sylvester Daryl.

McNamara Alan.

McNamara John.

Courtney Brian.

Courtney John.

Thompson Elmo.

Katarski Bart.

Taylor Geoffrey.

Barnard Gary.

Hanlon Arthur.

Blaquire Arthur.

le Breton Peter.

Crocos Alan.

Cohen Graeme.

Cohen Lionel.

Sanderson Liam.

Gorham Alan.

Dyson Brian.

Shugg Kevin.

Vance Ross.

Campbell

Stevens R

Andrews

Allan Peter.

Devitt Tony.

Mason Beric.

Atkinson Peter.

Chipper Kim.

Howe

Mortlock

Bowyer

Gwynne Ken.

2/

WOLF CUBS.

Chipper Don.

Cowden Colin.

Taylor Lindsay.

van Kempen Ties.

van Kempen Ray.

Ovenden John.

Lovegrove Vincent.

Riley Tim.

Cargeeg Graeme.

SOME LATER LEADERS.

Allan Bill.

Mortlock Len.

Cargeeg Gordon.

Howe Tom.

Allen (Miss)

Broad Doug.

Heath Brian.

Weaver Jacqui.