



...far and wide

Issue 54, October 2001

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Editorial

Following the recent terrorist attacks on America and the possible repercussions, the County team would like to let you all know that you are very much in our thoughts, particularly 1st. Islamabad and any other Group who are either directly or indirectly affected. It is at times like these when one realises the true fellowship of the Family of Scouting.

In this issue we have got quite a few photos but not a lot of reports. There are a lot of you out there and I would like to see more input to this magazine from you, so please send me something for the next issue in January.

Child Protection

Enclosed with this issue is a revised edition of the Association's Child Protection Procedures. This should be available for reference at all times and the appropriate contact details should be filled in. It is vital that correct procedures are followed. All new Leaders and helpers should be given the yellow card, "Young People First" before being allowed to work with the youngsters. All Leaders must be fully aware of the correct procedures in the event of any allegations being made.



Gilwell Reunion

Once again, British Groups Abroad had a stand at the reunion in the International marquee. This year it was even better than last because Tony Dunn had put in an enormous amount of work on a superb display of photos, badges and historical items. Robert Spargo had also produced an updated information leaflet explaining what BGA's are and copies of the last issue of Far and Wide were also available. Heather joined Tony and Robert and we spent the day talking to many people from all over the world, some of whom had been members of a BGA in the past. Rumour has it that there were Leaders from the Falklands there but the team seems to have missed them. If any of you are there next year do please make yourselves known to us as it is nice to put faces to names. We had hoped to have some photos of the stand but unfortunately they have not materialised so maybe they will be in the next issue.

News from the Groups

2nd Dubai

The Akela of the 2nd Dubai Cub Scout Group, Margaret Easton-Corke, was awarded her certificate of Long Service after more than 15 years dedicated service to the 2nd Dubai Cub Scout Group. Her certificate was presented at a tree planting ceremony in aid of the World Conservation Badge in the grounds of Jumeirah English Speaking School, Dubai. Shortly after the presentation, Maggie left Dubai to join her family in England. All the Leaders and Cubs of the 2nd Dubai Cub Scout Pack wish her well and thank her for all her years of hard work and dedication to the Scout Movement. She will be sorely missed.

The magazine providing support for British Groups Abroad

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1st Stavanger

In June, just before summer break up, Akela designed a Crystal Maze style competition for the Cubs that required them to complete certain tasks within a certain time but working as a team. They had to get from one end of the gym to the other without touching the ground; dribble balls around a course within a certain time; passing and running with a ball in a team; a relay race ending in throwing balls into a barrel from a distance. The Cubs had a thoroughly good time and were pretty tired at the end and also had got a better idea of teamwork from the tasks.



1st Fuengirola Cub Scouts

Summer is nearly over, pack meetings are starting soon and we will all get back into the swing of "normal" life. We held our first Group Leaders meeting tonight. We had a basic agenda; well I had an agenda and took control of the meeting. I did apologise at the end for railroading everything, but some one has to. Fonz said it was only to be expected.

We have decided that we will unite the group with the Guides and Brownies for more activities and try, to get a Parents support group, is this an executive group – to obtain a Chairman, Treasurer and most importantly a secretary who can spell and hopefully in Spanish as well. With this we hope to become more organised. Please suggest where we can get help on what is need and how we organise this.

Working together, we hope the parents will be more co-operative and find time to fit us in when it relates to both sons and daughters. We have arranged to organise several Group events as fundraisers for our Canoes. These are our aim for the year; to get something for the members to actually see something we can all use and, being so close to the water, it seems logical to use it. Not that we intend to canoe in the sea as Fuengirola council are promoting the river and want people to use it. It is sealed from the sea so would be safer. We will be using the Campfire as the start, with a joint Parent –I members games/challenge followed by burgers to be sold and a campfire. The Guides want to organise a family disco, and we are hoping to approach Dunnes stores to bag pack at Christmas. We are also appealing to the local community to sponsor a canoe, life jacket etc.

As we (the Cubs) had already planned our three months to Christmas, I did tend to arrange everything around our dates, which did seem to suit everyone else.

We, the Cubs, start back next week and then have our Open Evening the following week. We have advertised this in the local press, will be putting up posters and leaving take away handouts at English stores. We hope this will bring in some new faces. I have written to all old and existing Cubs with an invite to the Open Evening for two friends and families with a letter to the parents. So we are hopeful that we will get a few new faces.

We will play a joint coming – in game followed by Grand Howl a brief talk on our plans. Then we will have several bases as challenges between mixed teams over refreshments for all grown ups in the little hall. We will encourage parents to offer help on one night each term, also we will try and form the parents support group.

Carol Wright

1st Fuengirola Scouts

Last week saw the Sea Scout contingent set off for Leon to cycle through to Santiago de Compostela. This challenge was taken up in an effort to raise funds to purchase some much-needed canoes.

All along the 350km covered by the cyclist's, they met people from all walks of life, had an opportunity of tasting the different region's culinary delights and take in some breath-taking scenery. It didn't all go so smoothly, but apart from some gruelling uphill (O Cebreiro and Cruz de Ferro), a puncture and two blowouts, and the inevitable cold shower, the participants had a good time. In fact already talk has started as to whether the challenge can be undertaken again next year.

The greatest sense of joy is however reached when you cycle up to the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostela, and know that you've "made it". The sense of achievement and comradeship has made it worthwhile. Well Done Scouts!

Alfonso Sanchez



1st. Nanjing

Things are slowly getting going again. I've had a bit of a set back in that the way activities were arranged at school, I had to give up cubs for a quarter. I'm assured that this won't happen next year. So fingers crossed that we'll really get started.

The forms for school activities are going out next week so I'll know about pack numbers next week. Also I don't know if you've heard but hopefully we will have a Beaver Colony also this year. I think the numbers for that will be greater due to the numbers in the year groups. We'll see.

Jane Harrison

1st Ascension

Boys fishing for groupers (apparently very tasty)



Blast from the Past

BRITISH GROUPS IN MALTA

There were a number of British Scout Groups in Malta. All these had closed by November 1971 upon the withdrawal of the British Forces from the island when Don Mintoff took over in Government.

Along with the Deep Sea Scouts Mediterranean Fleet, the 1st Home Group was probably the oldest British Scout Group in Malta and was operating by 1948. The word 'Home' in a Group's title indicates that it was a British Group. 1st Home was part of Acorn District and comprised of Cubs and Scouts who were all Army dependants. They met in St Johns Bastion, Valletta. Their all – black neckerchief bore a distinctive Group badge of a white St John's Maltese Cross on black.

1ST HOME GROUP MALTA



GROUP BADGE

But probably the best known of the British Groups in Malta was 1st Luqa (Home).

The 1st Luqa was started by some leaders from the 1st Home and wore a dark green scarf with a yellow border. They were based at RAF Luqa. The Group had Cubs, Scouts, Senior Scouts and Rovers and later, Venture Scouts. They were RAF Recognised Air Scouts who wore a variety of unusual and probably unofficial nametapes including one stating RAF RU No. 58 (RU meaning 'Recognised Unit') and another showing

its military postcode, BFPO 51. This extract shows how the Group obtained superb facilities and some activities from 30-odd years ago:

Eric Hocking the new RAF Families Officer and an enthusiastic Scouter, arrived on a Friday in March 1968. On the Saturday morning he was in the office with his predecessor when a sergeant came in named Dick Fiddy. Dick's opening words were "Sir how soon can you become our GSM?" Eric never did find out how they knew he was a Scouter. Eric met the Oi/c Scouts who claimed to hold the GSM's warrant, so Eric acted as SM for a month until the Oi/c returned to UK. When Eric was formally appointed GSM, he learned that the previous officer had not been warranted! He had no Scouting background and had been given Oi/c Scouts as a Secondary Duty.



The Scout HQ was two Nissan huts with a covered walkway joining them. This was walled in, so the whole complex resembled an 'H'. The huts were covered in bitumen to try and waterproof them and it was a dismal place. It was alongside the Luqa Primary School, behind the Airmen's barrack blocks with no access to any grassed area. At RAF Hal Far there were wooden huts which had housed 38 Sqn. The Scouts had use of eight of the huts for "expedition training". The grassed area around the huts was used virtually as a permanent campsite. There was a short valley at the seaward boundary of the airfield giving access to the Scouts own private beach. A month after Eric's arrival, Malta got a new Air Commander who had been a King's Scout. Eric approached him and asked for permission to use the administration buildings at the defunct RAF Safi, about two miles from Luqa. He agreed and so wonderful Scouting facilities were created.

There was one extremely long building, which had been the Station HQ. At one end there was a brick wall separating a spacious kitchen from the rest of the building. The rest was an empty space about 12x5 metres. DOE built a second wall for them, creating a dining/rest room 5x5 metres and a group room 7x5 metres. There were about 12 small buildings, each measuring about 6x5 metres, with doors at each end and a central wall creating two offices, each 3x5 metres. A room was allocated to each Patrol and Six, and one hut was used as a store. Large tents did not need storing as the Services issued them with 160

pound tents (14ft by 14ft) when required. There were still several huts unoccupied and a second smaller building alongside the old SHQ. So the Guides were approached and eventually a joint Scout & Guide complex set up. There was any amount of land to use and a permanent campfire circle was created.

There was a radar station on Gozo called Il Cortin that closed in 1969 and there were two buildings. One had held radar base and technical facilities e.g. repair workshops. The other had been a combined Mess. Again Eric went to the Air Commander and asked if the old Mess could be used as a Families Leave Centre, (Eric was the Families Officer). When he agreed, Eric asked if Scouts could use the technical building as an expedition centre. Again he agreed. The Il Cortin complex, like Hal Far, was within a fenced boundary and similarly, had access to a secluded beach. Local fishermen occasionally put in to the beach to give or sell them fish and join in their barbecue meals. So the Scouts now had a HQ at Luqa, luxury at Safi, a camp at Hal Far and an expedition centre on Gozo!

Whilst camping at Hal Far, a freak storm arose on a trip to Gozo. On their return to Hal Far, two 160 pounders had been blown down, despite having been storm lashed. The ridgepoles had broken and the canvas torn to shreds. Luckily it was a working afternoon and OC Supply issued replacement tents within an hour.

Being RAF Recognised brought great benefits. The Supply Officer told Eric that he was to dispose of RAF uniform, which had been obtained for personnel of RAF Malta, which had been disbanded. The uniforms were issued to the Scouts. Instead of the official grey shirts they wore free Air Force blue. The OC Catering Sqn, Sqn Ldr Ken Woolridge, informed Eric that he had stocks of emergency rations that he had to get rid of at a given age. He let the Scouts have 14 Man Day packs for 2/6d each. Camp expenses were drastically reduced.

The SM took the Scouts to tour USS Forester, a US Aircraft Carrier. They had a marvellous time and as they were preparing to leave, saw one of the cooks putting hundreds of uncooked hamburgers and hot dogs into a container. When Skip commented on both items being in the same container he was told that they were surplus and were to be thrown overboard. There was a District Camp Fire at Safi that evening so Skip asked if the Scouts could have the food. The ship's Captain decreed that he would release the meat to them, but only if they took onions, ketchup, relish, bread rolls and baps and that four of his cooks came and did the cooking! The Scouts ate well and it only cost some bottles of Coke for the cooks.

By the late 1960s there were six Scout Districts on the island of Malta, with two previous Districts,

(Aardwolf and Bee) having been extinct for some time. In addition Gozo was a separate district.

In 1969 the Island Commissioner decided that this was too many. He reduced the total to three; Gozo plus North and South Malta, thus releasing four ex-DCs plus their ADCs for Group Scouting. North would be an amalgamation of Acorn, Griffin and Oak Districts. Peacock would join Albatross and Cotonera Districts to form the new South District. 1st Luqa was at that time in Peacock District.

The first to respond with a badge was South District. They decided to have a pale blue background to represent Malta's sky, with symbols from each of the three previous District badges. So a peacock feather and cotton plant stem formed a wreath with the albatross above. These surrounded the stars of the Southern Cross to indicate South District. It was felt that the design of the badge was self explanatory so no wording was included thus avoiding the complication of having to name it in English or Maltese.



Eric Hocking, GSM of the 1st Luqa, sent a sketch with a Peacock and Albatross badge to Russell King, badge makers in Kent. Even at that time they could not get a Cotonera badge. Russell sent back a sample - without the green thread - which Eric still has. The District approved but could not afford to buy them. Eric offered to buy a stock and to sell them to the other Groups at cost. The wily DC Frank Miggiani, decreed that the first orders would be at cost, later ones to carry a 5% surcharge for District funds. This stratagem ensured that most of the stock was distributed at the first release. On his return to UK Eric was presented with a banner embroidered with a large replica of the South District badge



Tony Dunn

Census 2001

Final figures of membership are now complete for the entire County (BGA).

This shows:

Beaver Scouts	426
Cub Scouts	509
Scouts	206
Venture Scouts	55
Leaders	141
Helpers & Administrators	42
Total	1,379

Membership Subscriptions 2002

The following is an extract from the text of a letter received earlier from the Chairman of the Committee of the Council of The Scout Association:

". . . At its meeting last week-end, the Committee of the Council considered a detailed report on the Association's finances, including the budget for the financial year about to start. It also received a parallel report on the initial returns from this year's census - which, to our regret, appear to indicate a further decline in recorded numbers. In the light of all the information available, the Committee has decided that the Headquarters' membership subscription for 2002 will be £15-30p with a rebate of 35p for prompt payment.

The major factors in the decision were:

- the need to stabilise and consolidate the operation of the Association at the reduced level consequent on the cuts imposed centrally over the last two years;
- the need to make some provision for inflation - which seems likely to exceed 2% over the year;
- the need to manage centrally the further reduction in income consequent upon the continued decline in paying membership - a reduction of £370,000 which the Committee proposes to absorb within the planned budget;
- [to our very great relief] the absence of any need now to have to provide additionally for the £10 per volunteer" charge originally proposed under the CRB arrangements - though there will still be a real cost to the Association for the administrative operation of the new clearance arrangements, which we currently expect to keep to under £1 per clearance [i.e. well under £100,000 extra, which the Committee has included in future budgets without adding anything to next year's subscription level].

I hope that you and your Groups will welcome this notification, and that it will help your budgeting arrangements. "

Welcome, Farewell and Congratulations

The Chief Scout has made the following awards to Leaders in our County – we offer our warm congratulations:

Medal of Merit – in recognition of outstanding service to Scouting:

Margaret Easton-Corke	Formerly CSL	2nd Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Janet Miller	CSL	1st Falkland Islands, Falkland Islands

Chief Scout's Commendation for Good Service - in recognition of good service to Scouting:

Neville Dutton	GSL	1st Salwa Scout Group, Kuwait
Elizabeth Hayek	CSL	British School Scout Group - Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

We welcome the following Leaders and Helpers who have joined us in BGA since 15th July this year:

Anna Keep	Programme Adviser	British Groups Abroad
Jane Spurin	Group Secretary	1st Islamabad, Pakistan
John Spurin	ACSL	1st Islamabad, Pakistan
Robert Troost	ACSL	1st Fuengirola (The Ark), Spain
Howard Wright	SL	British School Scout Group Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Farewell, and many thanks to the following Leaders and Helpers who have left BGA:

Angela Agopian	SL	1st Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
Jackie Austin	BSL & GC	Tanglin Trust School, Singapore
Sylvia Gould	SL	1st Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Lily Graham	ACSL	British School Manila, Philippines
Jacqui Huntington	ACSL	1st Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Jennifer Marani	ACSL	Taipei British School, Taiwan
Gillian Merzvinskis	BSL	Tanglin Trust School, Singapore
Sally Munro	BSL & GC	Tanglin Trust School, Singapore
Kathryn Stronach	BSL	Tanglin Trust School, Singapore
Monica Williams	ABSL	Tanglin Trust School, Singapore
Stephen Wilson	ACSL	Taipei British School, Taiwan
Melinda Zakko	CSL	1st Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Congratulations to the following Leaders who have been awarded Service certificates:

10 Years

Derick Postlethwaite	SL	1st Salmiya, Kuwait
Linda Yon	ABSL	1st Jamestown, St Helena

Bar to Long Service Decoration (25 Years)

Robert Spargo	County Secretary	British Groups Abroad
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Congratulations to the following Leaders who have been awarded Wood Badges on completion of their training:

Melanie Coslett	ABSL	British School Scout Group Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Janet Darwish	Formerly CSL	British School Scout Group Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Jean Levett	ACSL	British School Scout Group Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Best wishes to you all

Bob Spargo
County Secretary