

Bill Carden Papers

Personal Recollections of 1st Chalfont St Giles Scout Group
Compiled by Bill Carden, January 2007

Introduction

Former Group Scout Leader Bill Carden prepared these papers in January 2007 to record his memories of Scouting in Chalfont St Giles between 1946 and 1966. The papers provide a valuable first-hand account of the Group's post-war re-establishment, summer camps, the old Scout Hut, and the creation of the Silver Hill Scout Centre.

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How the Scout Group Was Re-born After the War

Documents the re-formation of the Group in March 1946 by Laurence Lees, Kim Budd, Alan Sleator and others associated with Newland Park Teachers Training College. It also records that the old Scout Hut behind the Parish Church was in poor condition and that early meetings were held in the village school.

The Scout Group Was Re-established in 1946

Records the development of the Scout Troop and Cub Pack during the late 1940s.

Joining the Scout Movement

Bill's personal recollections of joining the Group and the early post-war camps.

Summer Camp Locations (1946–1965)

Provides a record of annual camps attended by the Group including Bryher (1946), Dunster (1947), Crickhowell (1948), Guernsey (1959), the Pyrenees Expedition (1961) and Weymouth (1965).

The Old Scout Hut and Silver Hill Scout Centre

Records that the old Scout Hut stood behind Bowstridge Farm and the Parish Church; that Geoffrey Pennel provided architectural services free of charge; that John Browne and Fred Adams played leading roles in the project; and describes the creation of the Silver Hill Scout Centre.

Opening of the Scout Centre and Later Years

Reflections on the opening of Silver Hill and later developments within the Group.

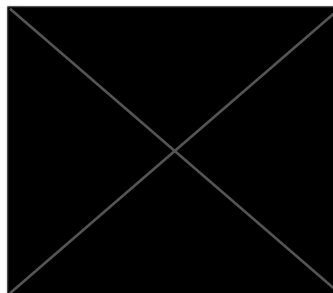
Bill Carden's Scouting Service Record

Senior Scout (1947); Assistant Scout Leader (1950); Scout Leader (1952); Group Scout Leader (1958); Assistant District Commissioner (1966); Medal of Merit (1963).

Editor's Note

These papers were prepared by former Group Scout Leader Bill Carden in January 2007 and preserved as an important primary source for the history of 1st Chalfont St Giles Scout Group.

1st February 2007



To Chris Harding.

Dear Chris,

Thanks for your call and your quest to delve into the history of the Scout Group in the village and in which I was so actively involved for the 20 year period between 1946 and 1966.

I welcome to hear from the Group again and having just discovered the new? Web site it is obvious everything is flourishing so well. I wish everyone well in keeping it all alive.

I have sorted out a box file of papers which includes a copy of the regular Newsheet which overall will explain all what happened (well just about all!) including some information and plans regarding the building of the Scout Centre. A heroic period for all concerned!.

Also a kind of diary book explaining events at the time the Group was re-formed after the war in 1946. Also a few notes, extracted, from my own account of my early years in Scouting.

Now at age 75 I can look back reasonably proud, in quietest fashion, of what was achieved by the village community in those heady days. I do not get over to the village so often these days and the only to take my partner Elisabeth to the hairdresser, to see my brother, or visit the dentist but from time to time it is good to catch up with some of the Scouts from those good years.

I am in the process of downloading so it is timely for me to hand over some papers to you and trust they can be placed somewhere safe so that that they can be passed on. I still have other records but these mainly concern sketchy details of the ambitious Summer Camps we held. I have no idea what happed to the Minutes of Meetings etc., which were always held by the Secretary Ted Crane who is no longer with us.

So sorry I have no information after 1966. It was a case that I had to divorce myself from the Scout Movement for health and family reasons. I would have hoped that Michael Saunders who was with the Group for the major part of the 20 years I was with the Group and continued with the Scout Section for a lengthy period after I left, would have been able to help.

Please contact me at any time, by E. Mail?, if I can help in any way.

With good wishes

Bill Carden

HOW THE SCOUT GROUP AT CHALFONT ST GILES WAS RE-BORN AFTER THE WAR

The events are chronicled in a log book by Laurence Lees which I retain.

The Scout Group was re-born in March 1946. The idea was conceived at Newland Park Teachers Training College in Chalfont St Giles.

The first name mentioned is KIM BUDD who met Laurence Lees over a cup of tea to talk about post war scouting.

Then Alan Sleator came into the frame and a Dougie Denyer who was mostly interested in the Rovers - the adult branch of Scouting.

It seems that at first they thought they would have little time for Scouting but Alan Sleator (who had run a Scout Group in Cornwall) said he would explore the idea to start a Group in Chalfont St Giles. So the idea went ahead.

Sleator would run the Boy Scout Troop and Lees and Budd would act as Assistants. At this stage others at Newland Park decided not to join.

Sleator approached Mr Groom the Headmaster of the Village School as he put it " to get some boys". A Colonel Dunhill came along to the first meeting. 30 boys at the School indicated that they would like to join - 20 were interviewed and accepted.

Maurice Finch the District Commissioner from Seer Green made an early visit to a meeting. It is recorded that Robin Ayres was the first Scout to be enrolled but he left within a year.

The Troop first met in the School Palliser Room. The Old wooden Scout Hut behind the Parish Church was in a bad state of repair at this time.

A first weekend camp was held at Newland Park, the followed a Summer Camp on Bryer Island in the Scilly Isles. A link was made with Alan Sleator's home village Scout Troop from St Just in Cornwall not so far from the Scilly Isles. This is the first reference to the fact that Sleator was a Scout Leader before attending Newland Park for Teacher Training.

There is a record of those who attended this summer camp in 1946 in the log book afore mentioned. At this camp Sleator was the Camp Chief. Lees arranged the programmes, Budd the Bank, Rikki Carr an "old Scout" from Newlands was the quartermaster and cook.

The records then show that following this summer camp things started to go wrong. It is said that the leaders, all based at Newland Park became too busy at the College and many boys left - there is some blame on those who left that "they did not pull their weight". Only seven boys remained.

In March 1947 the leaders would all be leaving Newland Park only Laurence Lees would remain and to settle in the area.

But, soon a Senior Scout Patrol was formed- this was the natural progression for the boys having reached age 15. The Wingate Patrol was established led by Graham Gibbard. This patrol provided the nucleus to assist at the 1947 Summer Camp held in Dunster, Somerset.

On joining I became a member of the Wingate Patrol and joined the camp at Dunster acting as Quartermaster.

Alan Sleator by now had moved back to Cornwall to run his St Just Troop again, Budd disappeared, Denyer went back to Great Amwell. Meanwhile Laurence Lees took charge of the Scouts at Chalfont St Giles and attended the summer camp at Dunster.

by Bill Carlen

January 2007

THE SCOUT GROUP WAS RE-ESTABLISHED IN 1946

In the event everything progressed very well following the Dunster Camp.

A Cub Pack was established and led by Brenda Beaver.

Godfrey Newton became Assistant Cub Master.

Moving towards 1948 the Troop became very busy with activities and did very well in the District events and camping competitions.

By March 1948 plans were made for a summer camp at Crickhowell on the Welsh Border.

The story continues.....

By Bill Cooper

January 2007

JOINING THE SCOUT MOVEMENT

The Scout Movement had always attracted me. Whilst in the Boys Brigade I had taken note of the existence of a Scout Group at Chalfont St Peter and also that SCOUT H.Q. ran a National Scout Camp Site off Denham Lane in the village. It was the outdoor activities that appealed to me.

In 1947 (having left the Boys Brigade) I was too old to join the Scout Troop so my introduction to the Group at Chalfont St Giles was to the Senior Scouts later to be re-named Venture Scouts.

My brother Ron had already joined the Scout Troop just after the end of the war when the Troop was re-born after having closed down for the war period.

The Scout Group at St Giles re-established itself in 1946 when Laurence Lees attending the Newland Park Teachers Training College became its leader meeting in the Scout Hut behind the Parish Church.

The first summer camp was held at Bryer Island in the Scilly Isles in 1946.

It was always the policy to arrange a Summer Camp every year and with some ambition some very good sites were found. In 1947 a very enjoyable camp was held at Dunster close to Exmoor in Somerset. The senior Scouts usually attended the same camp as the younger Scouts.

Always ahead of me was the fact that I would need to do my National Service. In fact my "call-up" was delayed due to studies but I would need to answer the call of duty in 1950.

In the meantime the Scout Group as a whole flourished and the summer camps continued.

1948 Glanusk Park near Crickhowell - not far from Abergavenny.

1949 Ramsgate in Kent.

Records of those involved are available.

Shortly before my National Service "call-up" I was appointed Assistant Scout Leader. Date of Warrant 13.2.1950. I joined the RAF in 1950.

Mum and Dad became actively involved with the Scout Group serving on the Parents Committee. Dad was Chairman for a number of years and often helped with providing transport for the weekend camps especially at Newland Park where many of these camps were held.

We used British Rail for the summer camps - we would send the camping equipment in advance and collect at the other end on arrival. In later years we used a coach.

The Glanusk Camp Site in 1948 was a superb site by the side of the rocky Usk River in a tree lined valley. To reach the site we walked along the side of a nine hole golf course past the estate private church owned by Lord Crickhowell. The golf course was littered with sheep. Lord Crickhowell was a huge supporter of the Scout movement in his area. The St Just Scout Troop from Cornwall joined with us at this camp. The connection was a link with Newland Park where the St Just Scout Leader Alan Sleator was also trained as a teacher. After his training he settled in Cornwall to teach in a school in the village of St Just.

by Bill Calder

written January 2007

CHALFONT ST. GILES SCOUT GROUP.

List of Summer Camp Locations (until my retirement). (Bill CARDEN)

*	1946	BRYER, SCILLY ISLES
	1947	DUNSTER. SOMERSET
	1948	GLANUSK PARK. CRICKHOWELL. MONMOUTHSHIRE
	1949	RAMSGATE. KENT
+	1950	WALMER. Kent
+	1951	BLOCKLEY, OXON.
		LAKE DISTRICT EXPEDITION. SENIOR SCOUTS- EASTER
	1952	SNETTISHAM. NORFOLK
	1953	DUNSTER. SOMERSET
	1954	TIMBERSCOMBE. SOMERSET
	1955	KIRK MICHAEL. ISLE OF MAN
	1956	HELSTON. CORNWALL
	1957	DARTMOUTH. DEVON
	1958	PEEL. ISLE OF MAN - BALLAWYLLIN
	1959	GUERNSEY. CHANNEL ISLES
	1960	PEMBROKESHIRE. DINAS CROSS
		MACHYNLETH. MID WALES. SENIOR SCOUTS
	1961	WYE VALLEY. TINTERN ABBEY
		PYRENEES EXPEDITION - SENIOR SCOUTS
	1962	MACHYNLETH. MID- WALES. GARTH.
	1963	BRANSCOMBE. DEVON.
		WEISSKAMM EXPEDITION- SENIOR SCOUTS
	1964	BUDE. NORTH CORNWALL
	1965	WEYMOUTH. DORSET

* Not Attended

+ Not Attended- National Service

RETIRED IN 1966

THE OLD SCOUT HUT off BOWSTRIDGE LANE to the completion of NEW SCOUT CENTRE IN SILVER HILL.

Period 1946 to 1964

The old wooden building that existed pre. 1939 was located on land behind the then Bowstridge Farm and at the back of the Parish Church. The hut was reached by a private track leading to Bowstridge Lane. The history of the Scout Troop prior to 1939 appears to be lost - some evidence was the existence of a green painted trek cart which was used again by the Scout Troop when it was re-started after the second world war.

The formation of the new 1st Chalfont St. Giles Scout Troop in 1946 is well documented in a diary of events which I hold. The Scout Group when correctly constituted grew quickly to accommodate two Cub Packs, a large Scout Section and a Senior Scout Section.

The wooden Structure, just a small hall, a back room and a side kitchen was kept in general repair by a Group Committee of Friends and Parents and this was supported by an energetic Parents Association. Due to expansion in numbers and its popularity the Scout Section grew rapidly and eventually weekly meetings were held in the village Memorial Hall.

The enthusiasm to raise funds for the building of a new Scout Centre in the Village also grew rapidly. Funds were raised were raised by the Group Committee and Parents Association headed by Chairman Col. Alistair Macleod Mathews (Chairman of the County Council). All manner of fund raising ideas were used and negotiations were commenced to purchase a plot of land below the new Guide Headquarters in Silver Hill for a nominal sum.

The old wooden hut and the land on which it was built was sold to Amersham Rural District Council for around £400 - in just a short time it became part of a development of Old Peoples Homes built by the District Council and the run- down Bowstridge Farm was also included in the development scheme.

From then on it was full steam ahead to build the new Scout Centre in Silver Hill.

An Architect Geoffrey Pennel ARIBA from Jordans gave his services free.

John Browne the Chairman steered the project through to completion and Fred Adams raised the funds through the Parents Association Committee.

Planning Permission was secured from the District Council.

The full amount of necessary funding was raised ½ by the Scout Group
½ by the County Council Education Committee

The Group Committee submitted a detailed report with projections to gain the County Council grant. Contracts were invited for the work prepared by the Architect. The lowest tender received was from W.H.Cardon Ltd.

By Bill Carden

January 2007

The opening of the new SCOUT CENTRE in 1964 and the years that followed.

The opening of the new Scout Centre was a magnificent achievement not only for the Scout Group but also for the village. The response of the whole community seemed to be behind the project - there was a will to succeed.

The Group previously bursting at the seams could now look forward to a bright future supported by good leadership and example in all sections. It had by now established itself as one of the largest and Scout Groups in the County. The future needed to maintain the balance of strong leadership, continued support of the Management Committee and the Parents and Friends Association and some regard for its place in the Village Community. All this backed up with adequate funding to maintain the fabric of the new building in good repair for the use of generations to come.

In the event the euphoria leading to the opening of the new Centre and the aftermath seemed to bring about a whole number of instant changes in leadership personnel notably in the Venture Scout area. New Leaders came along with new ideas and a situation developed leading to disputes over meeting nights - this in turn upset the Cub Packs and their arrangements for meetings.

The circumstances of the arrival of new blood in the Group and the inability to blend into a complete unit where compromises had to be made added to the fact that the "old hands" could not accept change became the deciding factor that seemed to be telling me that there was a "message" being delivered to me as the Group Scout Leader.

The strange thing is that whereas before I could have managed the situation, and had done so on many occasions I now did not have the strength, or will, to solve the crisis. There seemed to be a campaign to undermine the success we had achieved - a lack of vision was apparent. In the past we managed to all work together to ensure that the concept for the future was always greater than any ambitions held by one section in the Group. A sad example was to try to use the monthly NEWSHEET, which I edited, to air a grievance.

Usually these situations could be resolved easily around discussion but as the views became entrenched and unresolved my health began to suffer and decided to resign as Group Scout Leader at the end of 1965. I urgently needed a rest - I had had enough.

As well, the family needed to have first priority. Happily married in 1962 and with Ann having given birth to Debbie in May 1965 I now needed some space and time to think. Added to this my Dad was not enjoying good health - just a few years back he had suffered his first stroke, this during his Presidency of High Wycombe Camera Club 1960/61.

I immediately booked a family holiday in the Isle of Wight.

I did however, agree to make a limited comeback when the District Commissioner Ian Brodie offered me the job of Assistant District Commissioner - General Duties. I accepted this post in January 1966. This job had no connection with the Chalfont St Giles Scout Group. In 1967 I was allocated the task to sort out a tricky leadership/Group Council problem that existed in the Chalfont St. Peter Scout Group. Amazingly I managed to solve the problem quickly.

Job done- I decided that the time was right to take a long rest from Scouting. I resigned in April 1968. My family was now more important to me as was my health. My working life also needed more concentration. Also in the back of my mind I had a dream to follow my Dad and develop more interest in Photography. I ~~was~~ decided to join High Wycombe Camera Club.

Sadly my Dad suffered another stroke and two years later, July 1970, another, from which he never recovered. This happened following a family holiday in Brittany.

by Bill Carden

January 2007

MY RECORD OF SCOUTING SERVICE.

BILL CARDEN - written January 2007

CHALFONT ST GILES SCOUT GROUP.

Senior Scouts (now Venture Scouts)	April 1947
Assistant Scout Leader	13th February 1950
Scout Leader	16th August 1952
Group Scout Leader	18th July 1958
Assistant District Commissioner General Duties	12th January 1966

CHALFONT ST PETER SCOUT GROUP

Group Scout Leader (Troubleshooter!)	16th September 1967
Resigned from Scouting	30th April 1968

Awarded MEDAL OF MERIT	15th May 1963
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Holder of Wood Badge

**As Group Scout Leader served on Management Committee of
Chalfont St Giles Youth Club.**