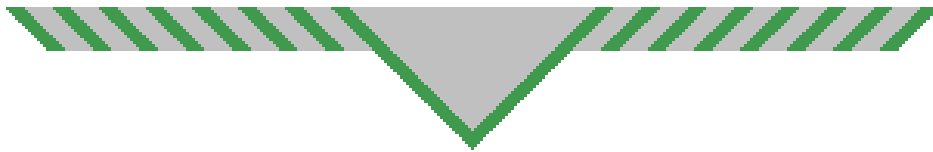


3rd Epsom Scout Group Official History Part 2

Version 12

Compiled 2022



This history has been compiled from such records such as St. Martin's Church magazine, minutes of Group committees, AGMs, log books, Exec Reports and the history of Epsom and Ewell District. Many thanks are owed to David Faulkner who compiled the majority of the history up to 1992 together with other people associated with the Scout Group, particularly the Collins family, Leslie and Edith Clark, Michael Arthur, Shirley Quemby (nee Moore) and Richard Ascough.

We hope you enjoy reading this history and feel that you then know a bit more about the Group as the longest continuous registered Group in Epsom and Ewell. Inevitably, there will be omissions and errors, therefore if anyone has any additions or corrections, however small, they would be very much appreciated.

Richard Ascough
Group Scout Leader

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Part 2 The 1930's and 1940's

Records from the Group in the show a hand-written census record of Group 5911. This reveals that in 1934 there was 31 Scouts decreasing to 10 Scouts in 1938. Cubs are not recorded in 1934 but between 1935 and 1938 remained fairly constant at 12 or 13.

Group No. 5911

Annual Return 1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
Scouts	6	6	6	2
Beewits 9	6	6	6	2
Owls 6		—	4	3
Bulldogs 8	7	9	5	5
Beavers 8	19	15	15	10
31				
Scouters				
G.S.M.		1	1	—
S.M.	1	1	1	1
Asm. 3	1	1	1	1
ACM. 1				
C.M.	1	1	1	1
Cubs.	13	12	12	12
1st class Scouts.			1	1
Kings Scouts.			1	

Figure 1 – Group census records (1934-1938)

Other evidence of Cubs being active in this period comes from the record card for Eric Hamburg who joined the Scouts in 1934 aged 11. The notes say 'Cub for 3 years'. This means that Cubs were running at 3rd Epsom between at least 1931 and 1934. The reverse of the census card also names the Cub Master as Miss Evelyn Cook of Ebbisham Road, Epsom.

The Group's records also show that Bob Warburg joined the Group in 1939 aged 25.

Name	Robert Oscar Warburg		
Address	Bridgely (Headley 51) Headley Epsom		
Date of Birth	9.11.14	Religion	C. of E.
Remarks			
Date of Joining		Age on Joining	25
Tenderfoot		Enrolled	
2nd Class		1st Class	
King's Scout		Bushmans Thong	
All Round Cords (1)	(2)	(3)	

Figure 2 – Robert Oscar Warburg record card (1939)

He was assisted by Robert James Cook who was a previous Scout Master with 8th Fife St. Andrews.

Name	Robert James Cook		
Address	D. Kerosha Purdeer Gardens, Epsom		
Date of Birth	7.4.13	Religion	C. of E. & S
Remarks	S.M. 8 th Fife St. Andrews.		
Date of Joining		Age on Joining	26
Tenderfoot		Enrolled	
2nd Class		1st Class	
King's Scout		Bushmans Thong	
All Round Cords (1)	(2)	(3)	

Figure 3 – Robert James Cook record card (1939)

In 1944, the meeting of the Group Committee on 17th February was informed that a post-war Commissioner had recently been appointed by the Scout Association (anticipating the end of hostilities) and had recommended that all Scout Groups:

- should have proper accommodation;
- must be much larger than pre-war; and
- should keep their HQ's open 7 days a week

It was agreed to form a Supporters Club of parents and relations of Scouts, to keep close contact, to give moral support and to raise the necessary funds for a new headquarters.

Accordingly, the Parents and Friends Association was inaugurated on 10th March 1944, In passing, we should note that, in spite of the war, there was a Troop of 34 Scouts, including 3

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“King's Scouts”, formed into 5 Patrols, including an Air Scout Patrol partly attached to the ATC (Air Training Corps); and that although a Troop Camp had not been possible, the Patrols had held their own camps and meetings in parents' houses. There were also 16 “very keen Cubs who turned up regularly”.

In 1945, the year the war ended, the Troop had a Whitsun Camp at Headley. They camped in the large grounds and adjoining woodlands of a house known as “Boidier”, accessed off the Headley Common Road. This was the home of Sir Oscar and Lady Warburg (of the banking family) who acquired the house and considerable surrounding land in 1924. The Scouts typically used to take everything up to Boidier (and later Boidierhurst) from Epsom on the trek cart - some walk but normal in those days!

The Scouts were allocated a site within the large grounds which was close to the Headley Reservoir. This was also used during the war years when travel too far away from Epsom was difficult. During this time the Troop made full use of this lovely site adjoining Headley Heath. They built bridges, climbing equipment and other outdoor structures. There was also parked there a 1920's ambulance which became some shelter during very wet weather.

Also in 1945 the Troop held an August Camp at Hill Head. The GSM was keeping in touch with all the “Old Scouts” who had joined up to serve in the Forces: the 3rd Epsom Scout Group Roll of Honour amounted to five (See **Error! Reference source not found.**). 1945 also saw Philip Moore join the Wolf Cubs, soon after his parents moved to Epsom. Philip was to have an association with the Group for 17 years.

Scouts and Guides were combining for hikes, training parties and sports matches. There was news also of “an excellent site released by Longhursts behind St John's Church, Church Road, Epsom where an HQ could be built. In the meantime, for £100, the existing buildings on the site could be converted into good temporary accommodation.”



Figure 4 – Ordnance Survey map showing land behind St John's Church (1947)



Figure 5 – Lorry at Longhurst timber yard

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In February 1946 Mr M B Smith left the Group and moved to Devon. He has joined in 1928 as Assistant Scout Master, progressed to SM and Group SM.

At the 1946 AGM, on 11th April, it was reported that

“Summer Camp would be in the New Forest
The Cubs and Scouts were corresponding regularly with French Scouts and their Scout Mistress at Carpentras (four Scouts were to go and make personal contact)
Joint training with the Guides was continuing, and that the Parents and Friends Association had already raised £230, most of which was earmarked for the new HQ.”

Work had already begun on the new HQ in January making an entrance, removing a partition and erecting a fireguard, but an all too familiar picture emerged: "owing to the lack of labour, this work is progressing slowly and volunteers are needed at weekends".

In July, some boys broke into part of the building and stole some of the gear but the police caught the culprits and everything was returned.

The Scout Master at this time was Bob Warburg (son of Sir Oscar and Lady Warburg). The family was destined to provide a strong influence on the Group and District. Bob had been a Rover Scout Leader in 1938, just pre-war and had lost part of a leg when an anti-aircraft shell burst in College Road during the war. The new GSM was Rev. Hugh C Warner, the Vicar, and he too played a very active and leading part in future developments. 36 went to Summer Camp at Brockenhurst where “Skipper, seeing a large billy of boiling water made the evening cocoa, only to find on investigating its unusual flavour that it was the one in which the meat had been roasted and was being cleaned out with soda!”. Sea bathing at Milford was prevented by a gale and waves six feet high; and the store tent became airborne. At the Camp Fire opening, the leader declared:

“As the flames point upwards, so be our Aims;
As the red logs glow, so be our Endeavours;
As the grey ash fades, so may our Errors;
As the good fire warms the circle,
So may our Ideals warm the World.”

In 1947, Bob Warburg married Angela, later to become Guide District Commissioner and while on his honeymoon near Lyme Regis found a grand spot for the Troop Summer Camp in 1948 (Charmouth).

For the 1947 summer camp, ASM Eric Flansburg was in charge for the 10 days at Kingsdown, Kent, from where the Scouts visited Canterbury Cathedral, Deal, Dover Castle, St Margaret's Bay and the Walmer lifeboat; Bob and Angela Warburg visited for the camp fire and he resumed as SM in September.

About the same time, one of the senior Scouts went to the World Jamboree in Paris and another to a camp in Canada. Also, during this year, Leslie Branson, later to be ADC (Scouts) in Epsom, had been helping with the Troop: “we owe much to Mr Branson for the noble and keen way he has been looking after the fortunes of the Troop during Skip's absence”. Les Branson was also SM of 2nd Epsom Christ Church Troup and in 1947 was also running the 3rd Epsom Troop.

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A new hut for the HQ was purchased and a priority building licence obtained but there were still delays caused by the Council Planning Committee and although the Vicar was keen to give the Scouts security of tenure no formal agreement had yet been drawn up.

Around 1947/48, after the death of Sir Oscar Warburg, "Boidier" was sold and the 3rd Epsom exclusive use of the site by the house ceased. Part of the site of "Boidier" was retained (close to the access track from Headley Common Road) with Bob & Angela building a new house there in 1952 known as "Dukes Meadow". Lady Warburg moved close to St. Martin's living in "The Grove".

1948 was a year of expansion and development after the difficulty of the war years. It started with a joint meeting of Scouts, Cubs, Guides and Brownies, at which there was "an interesting ceremony" of four Cubs going up into the Troop. They were James Shackleford, Christopher Hogg, John Davidge and Philip Moore: the last two were to give many years devoted service to the Group.

By May, "Cubs are going so strong here at St. Martin's that we are contemplating starting two new packs, making three in all. Mr Frank Maynard is to become a second CM thus helping to cater for the hordes of small boys determined to become Wolf Cubs but for whom there is no room in the grand pack run by Reg Johnson."



Figure 6 –Boidierhurst Camp site Logo (circa 1950s)

On 8th October 1948, Lady Catherine (Widdrington) Warburg, Bob's mother and a member of our Parents and Friends Committee formerly handed over the title deeds of the "small forest" of 10 acres at Headley, near their home "Boidier", to The Boy Scouts Association Trust Corporation. This was to be used by the then Epsom and Leatherhead Local Association of the Boy Scouts Association as a permanent scout camp site. This site was named "Boidierhurst". Alderman Mann accepted the gift on the Scouts behalf and thanked Lady Warburg for her generosity, which thousands of boys and girls have subsequently enjoyed.

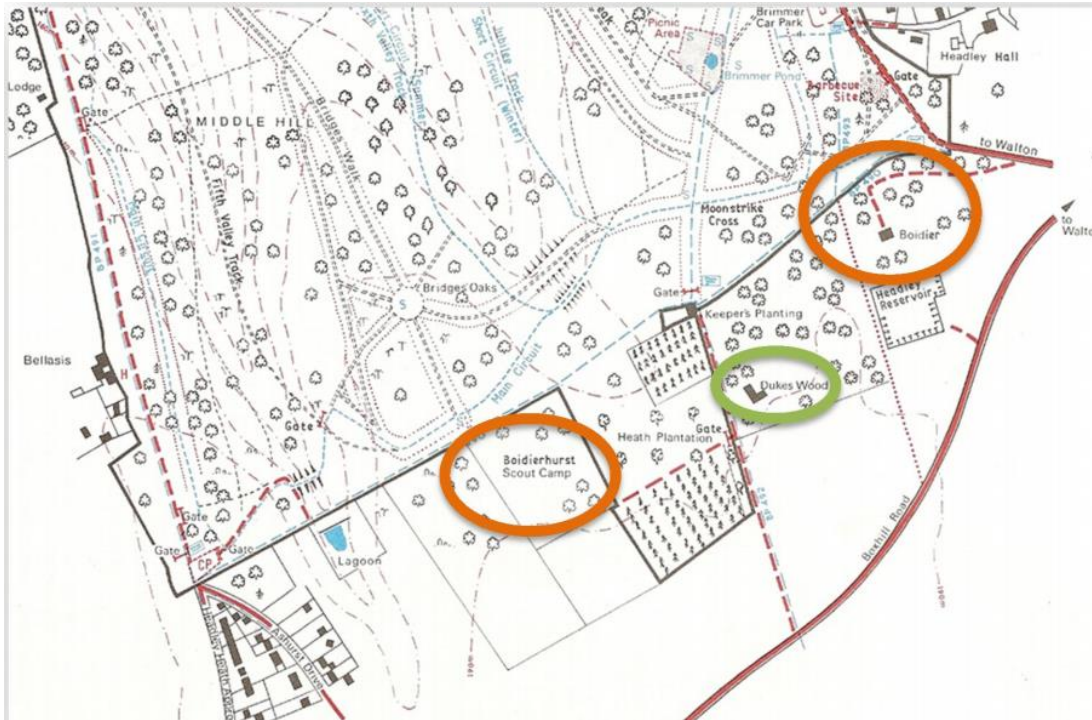


Figure 7 – Location of Boidier House and Boidierhurst Camp site (1977 map)

The Troop Summer Camp near Charmouth, Dorset was more than usually wet. The SM, plus wife and dog, arrived first in a raging thunderstorm although the rain had stopped by the time the lorry, with boys and gear, joined them on the site. “Later, however, during the camp, the Owls were literally soaked to the skin before being rescued by the SM’s car.” The Patrol leader of Owls was Brian Johnson (son of Reg Johnson the CM).



Figure 8 –Troop Summer Camp, Charmouth, Dorset, 1948

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Before the year ended, Senior Scouts were started at St. Martin's -a new Section intended to provide more challenging activities for older Scouts -with Hugh Morgan (son of Arthur the PFA Treasurer) and six others. Their leader was H.R.Hewer and they met at 3pm every Sunday.

Despite yet more delays on the new HQ - at one time all work was at a standstill because the licence to purchase building materials was refused by the Ministry of Works - it was possible to report at the Group Committee Meeting in January 1949 that "The Hut is up, the roof is on and the windows are ready for glass". Progress was being made, albeit very slow: in October the hut was half completed and nearing the decorating stage. £650 had been raised in 4 years: not bad for those days. There were still appeals for more helpers from the few enthusiastic fathers.

Rationing was a feature of national life in these post-war years. Uniforms were difficult for parents to provide. 225 clothing coupons were received from the Board of Trade which helped but there was an appeal: "Scout shirts and shorts are badly wanted. Old Scouts, please let us have your old uniform. Today they are a fearful price".

In the Autumn, the Vicar, Canon Hugh Warner who had been Group Scout Master (GSM) appointed Bob Warburg to take his place; Reg Johnson moved from Cubs to be Scout Master (SM) and Grace Jackson "who comes to the work with wide experience" became Cub Master (CM). Troop meetings were now every Monday in Church House; and Church Parades on the 3rd Sunday each month were to be re-arranged by the Vicar so that Scouts and Guides would not find them too long.

It may be interesting to note that this was the year when Bob-a-Job Week was introduced. BP was always keen that Scouts should earn their funds, not beg for them, although in practice, then as now in Scout Job week, much of the money passes in the spirit of donation.

The 1950's

In spite of a change of leadership, when Reg Johnson had to resign as SM and Frank Meeks took over temporarily, the Scouts were active and successful. A Group magazine, called "THE INSPECTOR" at 3d (2p) a copy, was produced by the boys led by the 4 PL's, Bob Burfitt, J Blackwell, J Sterckx and Michael Arthur. 8 Scouts went up to London one Saturday intending to visit the Scout Shop at 25 Buckingham Palace ("BP") Road, St Paul's Cathedral's Whispering Gallery, the Monument, RSS Discovery (the Scout training ship moored by the Embankment) and the Tower of London. Unfortunately they were all closed but they did visit Roland House, a well-known Scout house in Stepney. To complete a day's disappointment, they all got stuck in a lift at Waterloo Station!

At Easter 1950, some of the Senior Scouts attended the Surrey Senior Scout Camp at Cobham and met Lord Peter Baden-Powell, son of the Founder. In June, the Badgers won the District Camping Competition at the Forge, Headley: the patrol comprised Bob Burfitt, R.Davies, John Davidge, Philip Moore and D.Howard. Summer Camp was at Haywards Heath, led by Roland "Doc" Jackson (husband of Grace) now GSM (Bob Warburg was ADC) and Ian Weatherall, ASM and attended by 20 boys. During the camp they visited 39th Brighton at their site near Horsted Keynes to play wide games. This involved a long hike to get there and back not returning until 2.30am next day. Consequently, reveille was not until about 11.00am that morning!

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THIS LEASE made the *Twenty ninth* day of *September* 1951

BETWEEN REGINALD JOHNSON of 7 Hookfield Epsom in the County of Surrey Civil Servant GEORGE EDWARD WICKENS of "Old Basing" Heathcote Road Epsom aforesaid Timber Merchant being the Trustee of St. John Church Church Road Epsom aforesaid (hereinafter called "the Landlords") of the first part THE REVEREND WILLIAM GUY HOWARD incumbent of the Parish of Epsom aforesaid (hereinafter called "the Vicar") of the second part and MARY CAFFYN of 7 Beech Walk Ewell in the County of Surrey ROLAND JACKSON of 9 Ashley Road Epsom aforesaid and EDGAR CHARLES BURFITT of 83 East Street Epsom aforesaid (hereinafter called "the Tenants") of the third part

WITNESSETH as follows :-

1. In consideration of the rent and the covenants by the Tenant hereby reserved and hereinafter contained the Landlords with the consent of the Vicar and the Church Wardens of the Parish of Epsom (testified by the execution hereof by the Vicar) hereby demise unto the Tenants ALL THAT piece of land situate in the Parish of Epsom in the County of Surrey and being part of the ground of the St. Johns Church Church Road Epsom aforesaid which said piece of land is more particularly delineated on the plan attached hereto and thereon edged with red and on which there is now erected a scouts and guides hut Together with a right of way on Foot only but with or without carts hand carriages and bicycles and other vehicles (not being ridden or driven but propelled by hand only) over the

Figure 9 – The Original Lease for the land behind St John's Church (29th September 1951)



Heather Bailey (5th Epsom Queens Guide), Rev Guy Howard (St. Martin's Vicar), R.H. Pledger (District Commissioner), Alderman Mann, Mr Burfitt (Chairman), Mrs T.W. Macdonald (Guide Commissioner), Bob Warburg, Mike Arthur

Figure 10 – Opening of HQ (1952)

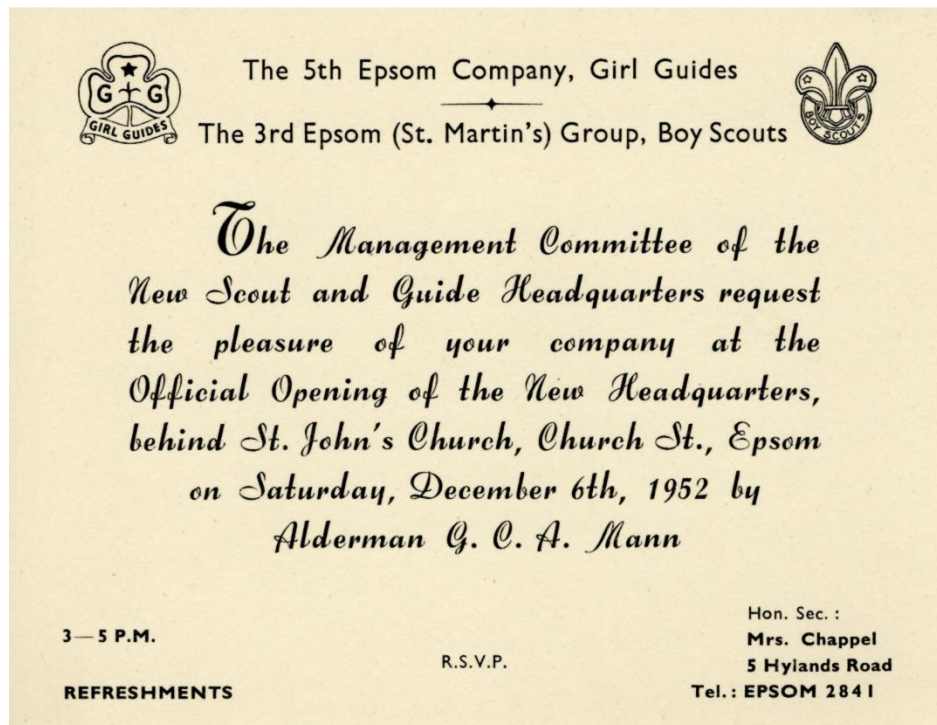


Figure 11 – Invite to the official opening of HQ (1952)

One feature of Doc Jackson (as he was known) was that he thought summer camps could be further afield and towards the North of England (where he hailed from) and also the need to abandon the usual lorry and travel by train.

In 1952 Summer camp was at Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire. This required meeting at the HQ at 5am and with two trek carts containing all the troop gear and 14 scouts each carrying their own backpacks. The scouts then hiked to Epsom to take the first train from Epsom to Waterloo. Getting these two fully laden trek carts into the Guards Van was a slick piece of work reminiscent of the Royal Tournament. There was about a 1/2" (12mm) clearance between the overall axle width and the train doors when wide open and two carts had to be done in about one and a half minutes before the train left. Once at Waterloo the scouts hiked to Euston to catch the mainline train for Manchester. Fortunately the guard's van door on these trains were slightly wider and there was more time to load up. Finally there was a change of train at Stockport to Whaley Bridge. Interestingly, whilst the campsite was in Derbyshire, water had to be collected from along the lane passing into Cheshire on the way. At that camp a long hike was made to visit Castleton Caverns, some scouts lead by Leslie Kingswood made a diversion to climb Mam Tor.



Figure 12 – Philip Moore (PL Foxes Patrol) with the 3rd Epsom Trek Cart (April 1952)

For 1953 there was a strong desire to return to the Peak District with the camp at Hope. Again there was a visit to a mine and the most interesting Speedwell Cavern taking a boat along the underground and low headroom waterway. By this time the troop was getting very experienced at compact camping and travel by train with no transport at all at the camp.

A feature of the late 1940's and early 1950 camps was the use of ex. WW2 (British and U.S.) camping equipment. Mike Arthur recalls one such item, that of a water container which became affectionally known as Nellie. This held about 50/60 gallons, made of canvas, rubber lined with five taps around the bottom and held by rope from a tree. Very conveniently this packed flat. Nellie survived for about 10 years.

At long last, in February 1953, the Hut was finished. It had taken a long time, the brunt of the work having fallen on 7 men, Messrs Blackwell, Burfitt, Caffyn, Meeks, Moore, Morgan and Ward; and there had been slow progress on the legal work involved in providing a lease. A Hut Warming Party was held to celebrate although, even now, "chairs, etc are still lacking and it will need at least £50 a year to cover the costs of heating and lighting. Later, at the AGM of the PFA, the Chair passed from Mr Burfitt to Arnold Knight; Arthur Morgan, Treasurer since the start was re-elected and Mrs Vi Whiskerd became Secretary, a position she was to hold for 33 years. "GSM Dr Jackson led a rollicking sing-song round a glowing log camp fire, a work of art by the Senior Scouts".

Within the Group there was little other leadership support below GSM Dr Roland Jackson whose business and professional commitments sometimes prevented him from attending regular troop nights and hence this left the organisation of those meetings to the senior patrol leaders. At this time Philip Moore cycled round Epsom every week to encourage the boys to come. Later Mike Arthur and Philip Moore took a lead as assistants to Doc Jackson for a couple of years with Mike receiving a warrant as ASM at the age of 18.

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In 1954, the Troop Summer Camp was at Marchwood, near Southampton in the New Forest. Doc Jackson, with his connections in the oil and gas industry was able to secure a visit for PL's to the new Esso Fawley Oil Refinery (opened by PM Clement Attlee in 1951). Trek carts were a popular mode of transporting gear then but the camp finished with a loss of 18/9d (94p) because they could not get the trek cart on the train unless they arrived at Southampton station in time, and this involved the farmer taking them at a cost of 30/-d (£1.50).

In December Derek Hughes took over as SM with only 11 boys; and there were only 13 Cubs, the CM Miss Dicketty being assisted by Mrs Collins. The 6 Senior Scouts were now led by Senior Scout Master (SSM) Jack Collins (JC) who organised and led a camping tour of the Black mountains in Wales.

The following year, the Senior Scouts had a week-end cycle tour of 172 miles to Folkestone, Dover and Canterbury before a more ambitious expedition when they did a very successful cycle tour of Northern France for 8 days, at a basic cost of £8. JC, whose brother assisted as official photographer, recalls that Ken Whiskerd (son of Vi) had very thin tyres which cut into the soft tar on the hot French roads and picked up tar and grit which had to be periodically scraped off. Nonetheless, he escaped without a puncture right up to Woodmansterne, only five miles from home! Regular meetings were on Saturday afternoons.

The Cubs had a pack holiday at Wanborough (the first of very many) and included two boys from a residential school in Banstead. The cookers in those days were old-fashioned oil burning stoves - Josie Collins remembers them well because she had to cook on them! The Scouts camped at Hythe; near Southampton for an incredible cost of £3 each. They travelled, as usual then, by lorry with the gear and during the camp visited Southampton, Beaulieu and Brockenhurst.

Rovers re-started at the end of March with six members, and had meetings with talks by JC and Doc Jackson and a 20 Questions Quiz. The Hut, although in full use, was still not completely decorated. Heating was by wood-burning stoves - wood blocks and old railway sleepers being obtained from the Council. This was not very satisfactory and gas or electric heating was investigated.

The Group was growing bigger again in 1956 with 24 Cubs, 20 Scouts, 6 Senior Scouts, 3 Rovers and 7 Scouters, a total of 60 compared to 48 the previous year and 45 the year before that. The Cubs went to camp at Brockenhurst going by lorry, as usual; the quote by Astridge of £25 for the two-way journey was considered very high but half was paid out of Group funds.

As Akela resigned, Jack and Jo Collins agreed to run the Pack "for the present". The Scouts went to camp at Arundel in Sussex and the Seniors did a Cycle Tour of South Wales, staying at Youth Hostels, descending a coal mine and ascending a mountain. The Scouts went further afield too in 1957. Mike Arthur had a contact in Pembroke Dock and the 1957 camp was held at nearby Sandersfoot, again travelling by train to camp with local Troops. A day trip was made to the lovely Lundy Island run entirely by monks. The Cubs again enjoyed the delights of Wanborough.

1957 was also the year of the World Jamboree at Sutton Coldfield, near Birmingham to celebrate 50 years of Scouting and 100 years since BP's birth. Martin Speller, Peter Clark and Philip Moore were part of Epsom District's representation. The Epsom Association was

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responsible for accommodation, programme and organisation, coordinated by Frank Moore, for a contingent of around two dozen Canadian Scouts involving hospitality before and after the Jamboree including a full day and evening tour of London and Battersea park fun fair. He was assisted by his daughter Shirley. This led to the meeting of Ann Benwell (CM) of 2nd Epsom with Mike Arthur and their subsequent marriage in 1960.

In 1958, the Seniors were busy building canoes - the start of a long tradition of canoeing in the Group - ready for a canoe camping holiday from Cricklade to Kingston. They also arranged a Cycle Treasure Hunt. The Troop Camp was held in the Lake District, led by Doc and Grace Jackson, assisted by Senior Scout Peter Clark. It was agreed that the Group should buy each Cub's first new scarf; Cub numbers had shot up to 43. Weekly subscriptions at this time were Cubs 2d (1p), Scouts and Seniors 4d (2p) and each Scout earned about £5 a year helping the Group's wastepaper salvage collection. Rover meetings had been suspended because there was no Rover Leader.

The Group Committee now included Mrs Vi Martin, G.F. "Kim" Piper (later to be ASM), Frank Moore and Mrs Malings; Leslie Clark, a member for four years, was appointed Secretary, a position he was to hold for many years. There was some correspondence with the representatives of St John's Church because our Committee were concerned at the dangerous state of some old huts between our respective buildings, and suggested that they should be demolished (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). This was eventually agreed and the work done by the older Scouts, under professional supervision: the salvaged timber was used to build a storage hut and another hut 20' x 10', donated by Ron Williamson, was also erected to be used for smaller Scout meetings.

This hut was named, after one in a popular TV show of that time, "Hut 29" and acquired quite a personality of its own!

In 1959, Jack Collins, who had been SSM for the past 5 years now found himself also running the Troop and the 2 Cub Packs, with a stalwart band of helpers and assistants. 1959 was a glorious hot summer and camp was at Seddlescombe near Battle Sussex run by Mike Arthur (ASL). He particular recalls a very hot October day during a district event at Christchurch 2nd Epsom when the temperature reached 80°F (26.5°C) - truly exceptional.

In October 1959 Mike Arthur left 3rd Epsom to start a Scout Troop at the 1st Epsom Downs affiliated to St Stephens on the Downs Langley Vale, a daughter church of St. Martin's. The 1st Epsom Downs had a thriving Cub Pack lead by Wilf Stockwell and required a troop for the Cubs to progress to avoid travelling to a town group.

The 1960's

In the early 1960's Mr & Mrs George Bailey lived in Oak Hill Epsom who had three daughters (Heather, Jenny and Linden) all three achieving the Queens Guide Badge in St. Martins Guide Company – a truly magnificent and remarkable achievement. The Baileys thought that was a need for a meeting place for Scout and Guides on a more informal and social nature. This led to the establishment of The Epsom Scout and Guide Club in early 1961. Mike Arthur was Chairman, Irene Batts (later Moore) Secretary, with Terry Maggs, Ann Todd, Philip Moore as management committee members.

Details are sparse of events during the years 1960 and 1961 except that in 1960 Geoff Collins and Peter Clark joined the Epsom College Scouts' expedition pony-trekking in Iceland;

and the Troop Summer Camp was at Lamberhurst, Kent, led by Derek Hughes. In 1961 the Camp was at Lyndhurst in the New Forest, led by Philip Moore as SM with Kim Piper and Brian Hughes. Josie Collins became Akela this year.

1961 was also the year, Geoff Collins and Peter Coombs were awarded the trophy for the fastest Junior Crew in a home built canoe in the Devizes to Westminster canoe race. Their time was 23 hours 53 minutes.



Figure 13 – Peter Coombs and Geoff Collins (1961)

In 1962, the Camp was at Plumpton, near Lewes in Sussex, run by JC with Doc Jackson and Kim Piper. Dave Faulkner, a prospective Scouter who had recently moved to Epsom, came to visit this camp and was directed by a young local to "the site with three elderly gentlemen" - they were very indignant but, well, age is comparative, isn't it? Philip Moore stepped down as SM just before his marriage in July 1962.

This was also the year when the building of a new Scout "Hut" was first proposed, an exciting project that was to last about five years. A letter went out to all Parents saying that fundraising would need to be stepped up because only £700 was in hand and a further £1500, plus grant aid would be needed. As a first move, a new metal superstructure and roof were to be erected over the old building but it took, in fact, until the following year for this to happen and to complete one end wall. The work was, as ever, carried out by voluntary labour provided by Senior Scouts at first and later by parents and friends. The technical design and co-ordination of the building was masterminded by Geoff Collins, son of Jack and Josie, and a Rover Scout now qualifying as an engineer. Geoff was a prime motivator of others to work together.

His enthusiasm even persuaded Leslie Clark to ride pillion on Geoff's motorbike to visit Ron Williamson, Chairman of the PFA and get things moving. Shirley Moore (now Quemby - daughter of Frank and Marjorie Moore and sister of Philip) kept a photographic record of building progress as well as making gallons of tea. Mr Palmer, father of a Scout, showed Geoff the trick of fixing large sheets of asbestos roofing. Alec Jardine gave architectural help and Ron Williamson, a heating and air conditioning engineer also gave technical advice as well as, with his wife, Sally, making strenuous efforts to organise fundraising.

£420 was raised in only eight months, and with a grant of £450 from Surrey County Council in 1964 the building work was able to progress steadily, over the top of the old building. Fundraising included Whist Drives in St Martin's Church House, the 5th Epsom (St. Martin's) Guides did the refreshments at the Myers Hall for the Christmas Gift Sales, a number of jumble sales were held and Marjorie Moore sold 'bricks' very successfully.



Figure 14 – Building the new HQ over the top of the old building (1965)
including Geoff Collins (far right) and Les Kingswood (second from right)

However it still took until the next year to lay the new floor between the walls of the new building and the old hut and the following year, 1966, the old hut was demolished and heating installed. There was great demand from the "young bloods" to help with the demolition but it was, very fairly, restricted to those who had helped on the construction work.

During these last two years, the usual range of Scouting activities had taken place. Troop Camps had been held at Ashmore Farm, near Salisbury, where Doc woke up one morning to find he had been lying, unknowingly in a shallow ditch which was filling with rain water; and at Cathanger Farm, Petworth where a nearby Guide camp proved a distraction, too much so at packing up time. In December, Dave Faulkner took over as SM while JC moved up to be ADC (Cubs) but retaining an Assistant's warrant with the Group.

In 1965, the Troop camped at Arne, Poole Harbour and visited Brownsea Island, where BP had held his first experimental camp all those years ago.

1966 was another year of achievement. Not only was the new HQ virtually completed and the first Jumble Sale held there, but at Easter, Les Kingswood and John Davidge entered the famous Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race, 125 miles, for the seventh consecutive year and finished in 28 hours, 30 minutes, despite a damaged rudder, broken paddle and faulty hull. In 1963 and 1964 they had been awarded the trophy for the fastest crew in a home-built canoe.

The race was, and maybe still is, one of the longest and toughest in the canoeing world involving canal and river sections, 77 locks round each of which the two-man crews had to carry their canoes, loaded with camping equipment, clothes and food. Rigorous training, with support from parents, friends and a team involved time and travelling. During the race

itself, Peter Clark (son of Leslie and Edith) and his support team followed the course by road to give the canoeists time checks, reports on race positions, to keep up morale especially during the night and provide emergency help if needed. The Seniors, led by Brian Hughes, manned an official check point.

During another race, at about this time, Geoff Collins and Brian Hughes capsized their canoe in a mill stream during the night. Ironically, they had just parted from their support team who assumed that all was well. They managed to get themselves and the boat to the bank and were eventually reunited with the support team. And elsewhere, but also on water, the Senior Scouts led by Brian Hughes had a "holiday" on a narrow boat called Sandpiper from Rugby along the Grand Union canal. It was a strenuous and eventful journey through flights of locks and tunnels with frequent groundings.

Further success was achieved by the Cubs who managed to get three Sixes tying for first place in the District Inter-Six competition and thereby winning the trophy for the fifth year in succession.

During this year, when Leslie Clark became Chairman of the PFA, and through to 1969, fundraising to complete the HQ was proceeding steadily. There were coffee mornings, bring and buy sales, dinner and dance evenings and Christmas gift sales, held at the Myers Hall (then in Ashley Road) and at homes of parents and friends, notably that of Reg Fossey and his wife Molly in Oak Hill. This enabled work to proceed slowly but surely: the floor and plastering were done professionally, the main hall painted, plumbing and drains completed.

1967 was the year of the Advance Party Report, virtually unknown by the present generation but for those who were leaders or Scouts at the time, quite an upheaval. Out went the old Scout uniform of traditional Mountie style hat, khaki shirt, shorts and long socks with garters: in came, green berets, green shirts for the boys, blue for Sea and Air Scouts (khaki for leaders), long trousers for Scouts, older boys and leaders, ties instead of scarves for leaders (which after a fight stayed as "optional"), and no Scout staves. The ten Scout Laws devised by BP, the Founder, were revised to the present seven: the Promise was altered slightly; and for Cubs "DYB, DYB, DYB" and "DOB, DOB, DOB" in the Grand Howl were replaced by the more comprehensible but less dramatic "Cubs, Do Your Best" with the response "We'll Do Our Best". To top all this, Rover Scouts, which had already been reduced to an age limit of 24, were abolished and replaced by Venture Scouts with an age limit of 20; the Scout Fellowship was the non-training section for those over 20 who did not want to be leaders.

For some, these changes were too radical, too many and too sudden and splinter groups of Baden-Powell Scouts and Rover Scouts were formed, unrecognised and disapproved of by the Scout Association, though many still exist and thrive today. However, the intention was to bring the Movement up-to-date and to freshen up its appeal to contemporary boyhood: and, after an initial significant drop in numbers, the policy did bear fruit and Scouting took on a new lease of life.

For 3rd Epsom, during 1967, the Troop camped at Path Hill Farm, Reading near the Thames. Parents Visiting Day was wet and in the evening when they had nearly all gone, a very muddy but enjoyable football match was played with teams wearing only swimming costumes. Doc Jackson's speciality at camps of this era was "the Commando course" with patrols moving from base to base to meet various challenges or projects. At this camp, Doc turned himself into a drowning man and floated down the Thames while each Patrol in turn

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tried to accurately throw him a lifeline: thankfully, he was a good swimmer! Meanwhile, back on site, Dave Faulkner was putting each Patrol across the rope commando bridge: all went well until Paul, halfway across, decided to jump off, let go and landed awkwardly and dislocated his elbow. There were no cars in camp so a real 999 call was made to summon an ambulance, great drama! Also this year, Josie Collins extended her activities to District Cub Scout Leader, retaining her CM/CSL warrant with the 3rd until 1969 when her son Geoff took over the leadership of the Woodland Pack. Josie remained ACSL, however, until she "retired" about 18 years later.

1968 was also memorable but for a quite different aspect of Scouting. It was the year of the Group's first Gang Show, staged with full Guide support at Church House to capacity audiences of 166 each performance. "Flying High" was the title song of the Show which included several Ralph Reader songs and sketches, including "The Colonel takes a bath"; and Brian Hughes recited "The Bricklayer".

The Group magazine was revived this year: "REPORT - of the Third, by the Third, for the Third" came out in March and June 1968. From its pages, we can learn that the two Packs were both meeting on Wednesdays, one at the HQ and one at Church House; that John "Dick" Whittington and Steve Elliot entered the gruelling Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race but had to retire after 50 miles and 104 locks; that Patrol Leaders, Brian Lee, Michael Noyes, Barry Coleman and Geoffrey Cooke, with others from the District, had a fascinating visit to Holland and were entertained by Dutch Scouts.