



Scouting East



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From the Editor



Unfortunately, I must begin this issue on a sad note with the news of the death of another much loved member of our District, our Vice President, John McCay. I first met John when I was a young ACSL at 10th, and he was a regular visitor at the McMordie Hall, or I had reason to call down the street to his house in Oakland Avenue to discuss forthcoming badge courses or forward completed badge certificates to him. I soon began to notice and to appreciate the conscientious commitment and attention to detail that was characteristic of John and clearly evident in his role as Badge Secretary, as a member of the District Executive, and in all the other tasks he undertook in Scouting. Reading through the back issues of Scouting East, to which John was a faithful contributor over more than two decades as Badge Secretary, I am amazed at just how many courses and badge days he organised, the number of instructors and examiners he managed to find to offer assistance, and the literally thousands of badges earned by our Cubs and Scouts in East Belfast thanks to John's infectious enthusiasm for Scouting and his desire to help our members experience that sense of achievement that only comes from working hard towards and truly earning a badge.

It was only later, when I became CSL at 30th, that I became aware of the tremendous contribution that John had also made to Scouting in Gilnahirk, as Scout Leader and later Group Scout Leader in the 1960's and 1970s. In recent years, whenever I called with John, our conversation often turned to 30th; he was a congenial host and I enjoyed listening as he sat, with his beloved dog at his feet, reminiscing about his old Group, in which he continued to take great interest; we were delighted whenever we were able to welcome him to a Group Parent's Night, and I was particularly pleased to tell John when we had found leadership to reform 30th Troop and also when 30th Pack won the County Flag for the first time in 1999 just as the 30th Troop first did under John's leadership in 1970 - indeed having read reports in the Church Magazine, 30th Troop seemed to win almost every competition they entered during the *Golden Era* of Skipper McCay!

A large number of former 30th Scouts had been in contact with Audrey and myself in recent months as preparations have been made for 30th Group's Anniversary next spring, and many of them had already told us how much they

were looking forward to catching up with John, or Skipper, as they still referred to him; the affection and high regard in which they all held him was obvious, and it is a poignant tribute to him that in the days after the news of his death, several have already told me how great an inspiration John had been in their formative years, just how much they owed to him and their tremendous sense of loss at his passing.

We give grateful thanks for all the ways in which this unassuming and amicable man touched so many lives in our District, and mourn the passing of a true Scout.

To his beloved wife Joy and their family we offer the deepest sympathy of all in East Belfast District at this time,

David

JOHN McCAY

Our District has been saddened at the passing of John McCay, one of our long serving and very special people. This tribute is penned in the name of all of us who had the privilege of knowing him.

John's Scouting trail started with 1st Portstewart Group where he was a King's Scout in 1940. His leadership years in East Belfast District were with 30th (Gilnahirk Presbyterian) where he will be remembered with great esteem. Here he was Scout Leader and then Group Scout Leader over a period of 34 years.

Following active leadership he became District Badge Secretary, a post he was to discharge with courtesy and great efficiency from 1980 to 2001, often combining it with involvement in other District sporting events. A long-serving member of the District Executive Committee, he became a District Vice-President in 2003.

John's exceptional service to Scouting brought well earned official recognition in the form of the award of the Medal of Merit (1975), of the Bar to the Medal of Merit (1987), of the Silver Acorn (1997). Equally it earned him the esteem and respect of those of us who shared those Scouting years with him.

My description of John McCay as one of our District's 'very special people' is not based on his Scouting attributes alone. He was special simply by virtue of being a very decent, kindly and genuine person or, as we say, in these parts 'one of nature's gentlemen'. He was unassuming and unpretentious but had, at the same time, a mischievous sense of humour. I was often to savour this in the craic we would share each month as he would punctually deliver to my home his Badge Secretary notes for Scouting East. I shall indeed feel his loss, as we all will, in a very personal way.

In his latter years, life was very unkind to him and he endured much suffering with courage and fortitude. Scouting in this District was enriched by the years of John McCay and will be the poorer for his passing. We remember him with warm affection and gratitude and extend our District's kind thoughts to the lovely Joy and her son John and daughter Elisabeth,

Ernie Sharp



From the District Commissioner

The *Party on the Beersbridge* is now over after a lot of planning and hard work by the District Action Team and by all accounts it was a big success. I have just received some 30 names from Deirdre Kissick of potential recruits and these will be followed through. Well done to all the Groups, to the Action Team and Chairman William Moore and to our Media Development Manager, Alex, for the super BBC publicity which we got. Now to plan for the Party MK2 and all Groups in East to build on the success and begin their own recruitment and publicity. It was great to see our Chief Scout George Purdy take time out from his busy schedule to visit East and to meet our Groups and Leaders. What was even nicer to see was the District working together, Leaders talking and everyone pulling together for one purpose. Let's keep it up.

The District will run a number of "Fundraisers" over the next few months in an effort to generate some finance to support the District Recruitment Team and the Action Team with budgets to enable the momentum started by the *Party on the Beersbridge* to be carried on. I hope that 100% support will be given by EVERYONE in the District including parents of Groups as we try to raise money but also to have some fun and bring the District closer together. The first of the "fundraisers" will be on Thursday 13th November at 10th Group HQ, McMordie Scout Hall, Oakland Avenue, where the "Can You Cook It?" night will bring two Chefs "extraordinaire" together!!!! The District will also be giving out Smartie Tubes and asking Groups and Sections to fill these (full details will follow). I hope that everyone will commit to these events. Failure to do so will unfortunately leave the District with no option but to put a Levy on this year's Capitation Fee.

I was delighted to join in the first weekend held by our District Young Leaders' Explorer Unit in conjunction with the Sixers' weekend at Killyleagh. Six young Leaders from the 10th, 33rd and 99th Groups enjoyed a weekend of activity and modular training and well done to Julie McIntyre and Richard Clark our Explorer Leaders for organising the weekend. There are many more Young Leaders attached to Groups and Sections who will benefit from the Training and social aspect of the District Unit and Groups should register these young people with Julie and Richard as soon as possible and encourage them to be involved. It was great to see Sixers and their Leaders from the 10th, 30th, 9th and 99th Packs attending a weekend of activities. What a pity once again that more Packs did not arrange to send their Sixers on this "programme on a plate" weekend. The Sixers of those Packs lost out. Well done to the ADCs, to 99th CSL Alex Henry and Deputy DC, Alan Campbell, for organising the weekend and to the Leaders of the participating Packs for bringing the boys. The Campfire held at Inch Abbey under candle-light organised by the D.Y.L.E.U and run by the Cub Leaders was first class with a super atmosphere.

It was great to see over 40 District Leaders attending our first Scouters' meeting of the year at our District HQ Tamar Street and to hopefully have any of our problems as a District taken on board by the Headquarters Executive Commissioner Ken Gillespie, who made reference to me of the number of our younger Leaders attending the meeting. Can we do even more to bring our young Leaders and helpers along to these District Leader "get-togethers" so that they can get to know others in the District? Your thoughts for topics for these meetings will continue to be accepted please. It was pleasing also to be able to officially introduce our new District Chaplin Rev Francy McCrea or "Francy" as he wishes to be known to our Leaders both at the District Meeting and at the Party on the Beersbridge. Francy will be very much involved with East District and I would encourage Groups to make use of him in his official role.

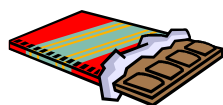
It was a delight to attend along with the County Commissioner the presentation of Bronze "Chief Scout's Awards" at the 10th Beaver Colony. The Colony at the McMordie Hall is "buzzing" and my congratulations to the boys and their Leaders for a great evening. I look forward to seeing you all during the forthcoming month and especially to joining with the 30th Pack and the 10th Troop at the City Hall on the 4th November when these two "East" sections receive their respective County Flags from the Lord Mayor.

Ian



Can You Cook it Night?

McMordie Scout Complex 8.00 p.m. Thursday 13th November
District Fundraising Event: Tickets £5 per person from Alex
Come along and have your supper prepared for you by
DC Ian or Deputy DC Alan



Death by Chocolate

The Jack Britton Hall at Gilnahirk has recently been overrun by field mice. It appears that good honest cheddar is simply just not tasty enough to tempt *mus Cherryvallius* and the kind ladies of the Gilnahirk PWA have resorted to baiting their mouse traps with the finest dairy milk chocolate!! What a way to go!!



Would those Leaders who were at the District Weekend at Killyleagh Outdoor Activity Centre who have not yet paid £5 they owe to ADC Suzi Jeffries please do so as soon as possible. You know who you are and why you owe the money and so does Suzi!!



Stormont Explorer Unit Summer Camp Lochgoilhead 2003



At the end of June nine Stormont Explorer Scouts went on holiday. We left early on a Saturday morning and we flew to Glasgow. We were in Glasgow for a little while and then we went to get a train and a minibus to take us to Lochgoilhead. Lochgoilhead is a tiny village situated at the top of Loch Goil near Loch Lomond. We didn't arrive in Lochgoilhead until late on the Saturday afternoon so everyone was very pleased to get there and to get to our rooms. We had to sign up for activities for the next day and decide which badge we were going to do. On the Sunday we started the activities. We did two activities each day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. You could decide which activity you wanted to do and there was a good range from archery, rock climbing, and hill walking, to fishing, kayaking and many others. We had to get up at 8 o'clock in the morning and have breakfast before going out on our chosen activity.

The Centre provided food for us at every mealtime and there was a selection of food you could choose from which was very nice. On Monday night we all started our badge work. Five of us decided to do the climbing badge, myself included, three went sailing and Sarah went kayaking on her own. The climbing badge included a lot of theory like learning how to set up a climb and tying different knots. We also had to do a bit of climbing throughout the week. We did badgework on three nights and on the Thursday night we took a trip to Glencoe which was crag we had to climb, a bit further away from the Centre. We had to set up our own climb and help each other out. Everyone did well and the next day we were presented with our badges. The others got badges for sailing and kayaking.

Throughout the week we did lots of different activities, the guys played some football, the weather was brilliant and we all got on really well. On the Wednesday we had the day off activities so we could do what we wanted. Before we left home, Ian had organised a boat to take us down the Loch to Ardentenny to go quad biking. We got to go across dirt tracks around the countryside and it was great fun. Although there were a few crashes, and some damage to a quad bike, no one got injured and we all made it back to the Centre in one piece.

We left Lochgoilhead on the Friday morning, after getting our badges presented to us and we got the train back to Glasgow. We spent the afternoon there and finally after a short plane delay got back to Belfast that evening around 8 o'clock. We were all exhausted and were glad to get back to have a decent night's sleep. I think I can speak for all of the Explorer Scouts that went when I say thank you to Ian for organising the trip, for taking us and finally for putting up with us! Thank you.

Stormont Explorer Unit



EAST BELFAST EXPLORER SCOUTS

As this is George Purdy's last year in office as Chief Scout for UK, Northern Ireland will lead the Parade with the Colour Party for the World Queen's Scout Award Ceremony at Windsor Castle (held around St George's Day in April). If there are any Explorers who are nearing completion of this Award, I would ask Leaders to push for completion and encourage the young people to apply to attend the Windsor Parade. From those Venture or Explorers who have experienced this day, it is a memorable occasion and a great privilege to be included in the Colour Party.

To all Scout Leaders – I need a list of all scouts aged between 13-14 years so we can introduce them to Explorer Scouting, their neighbouring unit and the opportunity of becoming involved with the District Explorer Unit. (please e-mail this list to Trevor).

EXPLORER SCOUTS AND LEADERS

Yet another reminder for all Explorer Leaders to forward their membership list to Trevor Dunbar, E-mail Address - trev.dunbar@dnet.co.uk . Don't forget that young Leaders (14-18 years) helping in other scouting sections also need to be registered as Explorer Scouts.

District Events for the year – we will be running district events each month and similarly to last year, I am asking each Unit to organise one event each –

November	District	Habitat for Humanity Wed 12 or 19 Nov at Stormont Presbyterian Church
December	McMordie	Thursday, 4 December at 7.30 pm
January	Belmont	Friday, 16 January (<i>time to be arranged</i>)
February	Knock	<i>date and time to be arranged</i>
March	Gilnahirk	<i>date and time to be arranged</i>

Ian McLachlan, Explorer Scout Commissioner



Weary and footsore after a long hard day's hiking in the Mourne's? Well why not book- in for a relaxing foot massage and bath at *Sydenham Methodist Health Spa? -opening soon!!!* (the foot spa donated for the District Ballot was eventually won by Ann Anderson, and we gather Pat Gordon will be first in the queue to try it out!)



Plea from the District Treasurer



Following my surprise appearance at the last District Scouters' Meeting, I would just like to further my plea for return of all funds raised by sale of the Paper Quiz 'Name the Sweet' as soon as possible. This should have been returned to me by 12th May 2003 at the AGM.

This was the first of many District Fundraising Events and I thank you all for your support. Please make a special effort to attend our next event, 'Can you Cook it' starring DC Ian versus Deputy DC Alan be held in 10th Hall Oakland Avenue on Thursday 13th November. Price £5 per ticket. The Beef and Livestock Commission stipulate that there should be 200 people present.

Looking forward to seeing you and all your friends on the night,

Ann Hanna, District Treasurer

Happy Retirement to Roly

Many thanks to Leaders of 9th Group for the invitation to join with them at the surprise party they arranged last month to mark Roly's retirement as GSL at Sydenham Methodist. As a former Cub Scout at 9th I have fond memories of the part Roly played in Pack Holidays and camps during my time with the Pack.

The great and the good of East Scouting and local Methodism congregated in semi darkness as we hid in the pews and aisles of the Church, before making our way into the Watson Hall as Roly was closing the Pack meeting. Imagine the look of sheer astonishment on his face at the unexpected arrival of so many friends, the line of people taking up position around the hall seemed to stretch for miles!

It was fitting that Roly's many years service to Scouting, initially at 59th St Mark's, but predominantly at 9th, where he was Scout Leader and latterly Group Scout Leader should be recognised in this way. It was lovely too that the officers of the Sydenham Girls' Brigade, the minister and members of the Quarterly Board, as well as members of the District Team and Executive, and 9th Leaders past and present, including Margaret Watkins, Eleanor Farrell, Florence Johnston and Catherine Emerson were able to join together to honour Roly's work on behalf of Scouting in Sydenham. Roly's appreciation of the night, and his delight at being able to reminisce with former Scouts and fellow Leaders was clear for all to see.



Despite having to reluctantly accept a free bus pass, Roly is not bowing out of Scouting just yet though, as he plans to remain as a serving member of the District Executive and has also taken up the position of Group Chairman at 9th.

David



30th Belfast Summer Camp, Edinburgh 2003



At the unearthly hour of 6.30 a.m. on a Monday morning in August, a bleary eyed group of Cubs and Leaders met at the Jack Britton Hall, piled into minibus and car and headed for the Sealink check-in desk en route to Troon. On our journey to Edinburgh, we stopped off at M&D's Theme Park near Kilmarnock for an afternoon sampling the thrills and spills of roller coasters, waterslide, log chute and other scary rides. Our base for the week was Bonaly Scout Campsite, owned by Edinburgh Area Scout Association, and just five miles from the city centre.



This year, we went 'upmarket' staying in the recently refurbished Forth Lodge chalet, complete with all mod-cons, duvets, hot showers, microwave oven and leaders' lounge, even The Hilton would have struggled to match our 4 star accommodation. Of course we didn't want to spoil the Cubs completely, so they all had the opportunity to spend a few nights camping in the grounds around the chalet for their camper badge, and the seniors built a tree-shelter which they slept out in on several occasions, wakening to find squirrels crawling over their sleeping bags foraging for food- which was in a fairly plentiful supply thanks to the midnight feasts and regular trips to the campsite tuck-shop to restock supplies.



Activities during the week included a visit to Edinburgh Castle to visit the ramparts (what part of *don't climb on that cannon* do you not understand Finlay!!), prison cells (how much do you reckon that guard would charge to lock 'em up and throw away the key?) and Scottish crown jewels (so that's where Gail got that expensive necklace and funny hat she was wearing at the last 30th leaders' meeting?), and to Edinburgh Butterfly and Insect World where the Cubs completed the Naturalist Badge- we plan to give Haithi a bravery award for conquering her fear and venturing inside a greenhouse full of butterflies, moths, ants and all manner of creepy crawlies- certainly not for the faint hearted! Mid-week we travelled across the Forth Bridge to Deep SeaWorld, where the Cubs were able to grapple with snakes and lizards just like that chap on TV from the Australian Outback, before heading on to 'Scotland's Secret Bunker' built during the Cold War- now how was someone with Akela's legendary navigating skills ever going to find a secret bunker hidden in the middle of the Fife countryside??? Well fear not, would you believe the helpful Scots had actually posted signposts to their *secret* bunker and even Akela found his way! (in their defence at least the signs were written in English not Russian, no point in being too helpful!). The Cubs were mesmerised by all of the army equipment, radios, maps, weapons and supplies they encountered on descending underground to the restricted access area.



Many of the boys are keen rugby fans, one of their Dad's had even played for Scotland in his younger days, and we were treated to a very enjoyable tour of Murrayfield Rugby Stadium, taking in the stands, pitch, dressing rooms, function rooms and VIP and Press areas and inevitably the gift shop too! We also had an excellent trip to the Museum of Flight at East Fortune, which had expanded greatly since our last visit in 1995, with many more WWII planes in the hangers, a 737 outside and a new display on space travel; the staff at the museum were very accommodating and all the Cubs had the opportunity to work on their Air Activities Badge.



Another highlight was the Edinburgh Dungeon, complete with a visit to the torture chamber, a boat ride in the dark through the sewers of old Edinburgh, being trapped in a burning cottage as Highland Clansmen and wailing banshees moved in to massacre us, and best of all ringside seats in the dissecting room where a frightening surgeon asked Jordan to assist him on stage in dissecting a bloody and gory but all too lifelike decomposing corpse!! We're not too sure what long-term effect all this has had on Jordan, we feel he was just a little too keen to help the surgeon throw rotting body parts and squirt vile bodily fluids at the unsuspecting audience; Akela is already dreading the day he walks into the lecture theatre at QUB to discover that Jordan has enrolled at medical school!



During the week we also took part in some of the excellent activities organised on site, including the aerial runway and orienteering course, fought the multitude of midges that attacked mercilessly each evening, and also cooked many of our meals outdoors on the campfire, including a traditional Burns Supper of Scotch Broth, Haggis, Neeps and Tatties, and stodgy pudding, washed down with Irn Bru and finished off with Highland Toffee, although on our final evening in Edinburgh we did treat ourselves to fish and chips in Harry Ramsden's before soaking up the atmosphere of the street theatre and musicians at the Edinburgh Festival. One night we ventured to the Artificial Ski Slopes which border onto the campsite for an evening of skiing and snowboarding, with the exception of Gail who is an accomplished skier, the Cubs put the adults to shame and we reckon it will be a long time before Akela and Haithi venture onto a real ski slope- they're still nursing bruises and suffered the ultimate indignity of having to ask Cubs to help them get back on their feet each time they tripped on their skis and fell over! We rounded off the week with a visit to The Magnum Centre in Irvine on our return journey to ensure that all the Cubs returned home to Mum having washed at

least once that week! It was amazing how many bars of soap we found still in wrappers during mid week kit inspection, and one Cub even claimed his Mum hadn't bothered to send any soap this time as he had never once used it at any previous camp so why start now! Congratulations to Andrew Kernohan who was presented with the Cub of the Camp Shield. Many thanks to 43rd BB Company who lent us their minibus, to Davy Hawthorne for driving it and for all his help during the week and to our ABSL Gail, for her superb cooking and navigating skills (with her in the passenger seat even Akela couldn't possibly get lost!).

David and Donna, 30th



Don't forget to let your ADC know how many tubes of *Smarties* you need if your Section intends to participate in the *Smarties* Challenge as part of our District Fundraising campaign. Please return your *Smarties* tube filled with coins by early December in exchange for a selection box

Events in November

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| 1 st | District Under 12 Scout Floorball Competition
99 th HQ, Belmont Presbyterian Church
Contact: ADCs (Scouts) |
| 10 th | District Executive Meeting
District HQ, Tamar Street
Contact: Harry Davison (Secretary) |
| 11 th | District Fellowship Meeting
10 th Group HQ, Oakland Avenue
Contact: Harry Diamond (Chairman) |
| 13 th | District Cub Scout Cyclist Badge
3 rd HQ, St.Brendan's C of I
Contact: Jenny Lamont (Badge Secretary) |
| 15 th | District Beaver Scout Sports Day
9 th HQ, Sydenham Methodist Church
Contact: ADCs (Beaver Scouts) |



**News & Views, Letters & Comments,
Reports & Announcements to the Editor:**

Email: d.bell@qub.ac.uk or eastbelfast@yahoo.com
not later than **6th November** for the Christmas Issue please!