

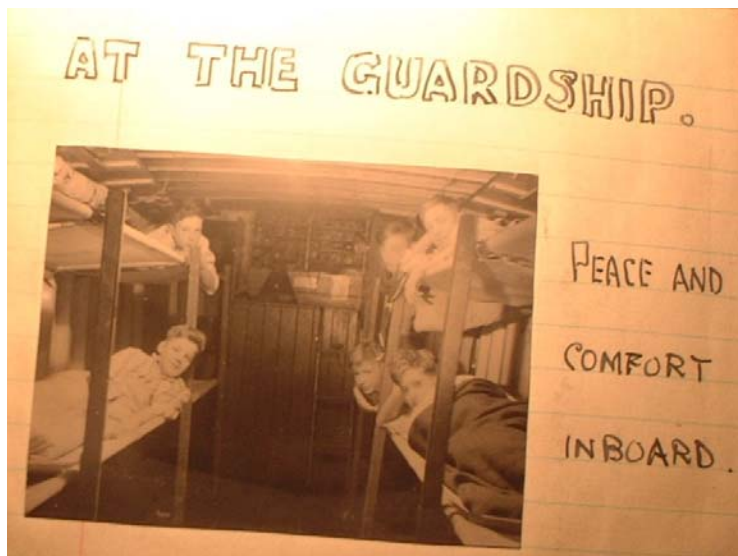
Part two Memories of the Days long gone

Scouting changed for the better after the Advanced party Report

It was decided to have a serious look at the current scope of activities and uniform of the organisation.

Long trousers and a beret were considered up to date but the loss of the staff was deemed a step too far. Never the less the real innovation was the idea that girls would be able to join in the fun.

There were six groups in the country chosen, known as “development Groups” and with Jos Carver’s influence we were one of the six. Quite what Gilwell expected to develop we were not sure. We tried placing the girls in a Deck of their own. It didn’t work so we mixed the girls and boys into one big group. That worked, the trial period was about three years. There is another story here.



Our Admiralty Inspection in progress at the Junior Chuckery School. The Inspecting Officer was interviewing each “scout” in turn, the girls had made some effort to look Boyish Hair out of sight scrubbed faces etc. The Comdr, Jos and I advanced Deck by Deck until we got to ‘C’ Deck. The Deck Leader was every inch a girl, from the front and the back. “ YES!” he yelled, not a word had been said to him and he strode firmly back along the boys and girls and pointing his finger, “and this one and this one and this one... ,What a wonderful idea . The boys will have to look out now” He was right. More

badges more boat work Sharper uniforms. This was the best thing that ever happened to scouting and in particular the Third. Prejudice? “Not on your life”.

1966 saw the retirement of Sarg. Having given 50 years of his life to Scouting. L.G.S. “Sarg” was content to hand over the product of his own endeavour, enterprise and passion to Jos Carver . Knowing the Group was in safe, capable hands

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Jos extended the Group to include Cub Scouts and latter Beaver Scouts. Gilwell realized at last that the best way forward was to allow girls into the Scout training scheme.

So nationally six groups were chosen as development groups, and the third were one of the six. So we had Boys only, until this point. Beavers 6 to 8 Cubs till 10 ½ and the Boys and Girls Scouts till 14 ½ Ventures Till 18 and then any still standing could be a Scouter. Gilwell picked six Groups in various Counties to become pilots in this break from tradition and called them "Development Groups". We were selected and at the end of the initial three year years it was declared and success

This was not Sarg's way at all. He gave me a ring at home, I put down my knife and fork and answered the phone, recognizing his voice immediately "Hello Sarg"

"Come and see me" he said and hung up.

I forfeit the rest of my meal, motored over to Gorway Road parked and rang the door bell. The door opened sharply right away.

"You have girls in the Troop!"

"Yes" I said enthusiastically

"I can see nothing but disaster, it will only end in grief" and shut the door.

Perplexed and sad, I went home knowing for once he was wrong.

repeat story sorry.

We tried a Girl only Deck, but this simply did not work, the girls felt marginalized. So Jos and I placed girls everywhere. Girl Deck Leaders in charge of boys in charge of girls we all camped together as Scouts with a capital letter and it worked.

There is a Killock story about one of the Admiralty Inspections at this time when we didn't tell Lt Cmdr Cressy that there were girls on parade. He looked at the first and second decks and particularly closely at a couple of scout but hair was severely out of sight and they were all very young, mmmmmm and then he came to "C" Deck and Clare was grown up and a Deck Leader. "Yes" he called out and that one and that one" He looked and Jos and I hard and said something very nautical.

Sarg's life time association with Scouting and International Scouting had brought him a contentment and happy memories, a significant achievement was to pass over two thousand boys for their "Tenderfoot Badge" The test Sarg devised was quite close to the Second Class or Pathfinder Scout Standard in its various forms.

The test comprised; Kims Game; Six knots; three whippings; knowledge of the movement; parts of the Union Jack; and when it was put together. Law & Promise some B.P. stories It took most of a Saturday afternoon. In the end he sold to you two hats one blue one white; a Sea Scout jersey, and a blue neckerchief and gave you a red plastic woggle.

He went on to give credit to some old boys that had enjoyed important positions in society and in his retirement he was very proud of them all

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Early Days”

1943

According to the Log Book The temporary floating H.Q. that we were maintaining for Sutton Sailing Club was breaking up. There were several schemes put forward. i.e. A brick built H.Q. on the North Shore of Powell’s Pool or a more ambitious project was to have a floating H.Q. A long boat builder Worsey Ltd. in Walsall undertook to construct the vessel in their yard in North Street, Pickfords transported her to Sutton Park August the 5th 1944

1944

The Log Books start here although there are films on 9.5 stock and other memorabilia that stem from 1926 1927 and 1930 which quietly upsets the dates given above for the first two films show the third in scout uniform and the 1930 film is Sea Scout Uniform. Sarg and a crowd are sailing on the Norfolk Broads. On the Bure by St. Benet Abbey, the back drop of the scene is the windmill there working.

The opening article in the 1944 Log is an account of a visit to London under the guidance of the 1st Radlett Group for the Skipper of Radlett was a cousin of Stanley’s. They spent one night at the Radlett H.Q.. In a group of 70 Sea Scouts spent a most hectic Saturday travelling into London to see the National Sea Scout Exhibition at Scottish Drill Hall Buckingham Gate SW1 also the itinerary included a visit to “RRS Discovery” moored by Cleopatra’s Needle on the Embankment.

1945

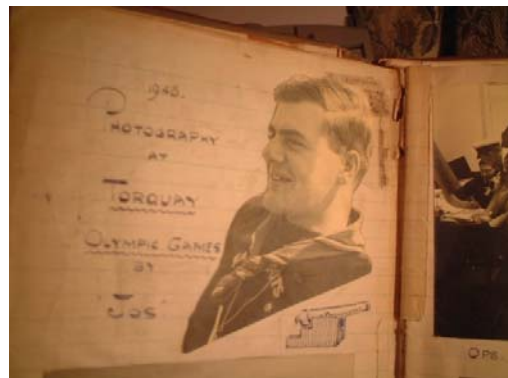
Whitsun Camp at Log Settlement for the Senior Scouts

Annual August Camp at Log Settlement

A supplementary coat of paint for the Guardship.

1946

Jamboree at Beaudesert. A privileged troop of Norwegians were invited to the Guardship I do believe that it was at this time at Beaudesert there was a land slip, through the mining activities taking place at Rugeley. This fractured the main drainage pipe, it was only moments before the trouble was obvious. Jos Carver and a few Senior Scouts undertook to dig a very substantial trench and replace this salt glaze pipe in record time, thus saving the camp and preserving the hygiene of the Jamboree. For this major effort Jos was awarded the Medal of Merit.



1947

Easter Camp at Log Settlement

Training on board “RRS Discovery” moored on the Embankment

Water display at the Arboretum May during Scout Week

Radlett came to camp on the Guardship for their annual camp. Robin Webb and I were invited to join them on board, to show them the routine and where the local shops, baths, Sarg’s works.

1948The third Walsall Sea

Scouts and Sutton Coldfield Sea Scout were

chosen to go to the Olympics in Torquay

Transporting the competitors to their boats

moored off shore.

The Same team played host to the world of Scouting in 1957 at Sutton Park.

1949

A Broads Camp



From the right

Reg Plumber; John Stanley; Ian McManus;
Les Williams; Darby

1955

The Guardship sank for the first time. With the news that the 50 years of Scouting was going to be celebrated in Sutton Park, with a Jamboree we decided to build a cabin on the top side of the guardship, to offer visiting Scouters better seating arrangements.

Unthinkingly this extra weight forced a usually dry seam in the basic hull under the water. That winter she sank. John Carver took control and unknowingly taught me how to raise her. This stood me in good stead for half a dozen other times she was raised from the deep

On this occasion we bolted galvanized brackets to the timber hull and suspended oil drums down each side and decked them over. This provided a wide catwalk and tremendous stability.





1957

The Jamboree; Indaba & MOOT,
in Sutton Park

1957

The Sea Scouts of Sutton
Coldfield and Walsall Sea Scouts
played host the World of Scouts
and helped to organize the World
JUBILLE JAMBOREE INDBA
& MOOT in Sutton Park
There is a film that covers this
event.

At odd weekends just before the Jamboree, I had attended several County Meetings with Sarg. Just taking a few notes of dates, times and venues, later following the tuition given to me as a Work Services clerk in the army, I typed out notices, alternative minutes and schedules. This led Sarg to ask me if I was going to attend the event.

” No”. I said “I will still be doing my National Service.”

“How much longer have you to serve”? was the next question.

“About four days after the Jamboree finishes”.

“I’ll see what I can do”. Knowing Sarg, that was just about anything. Sure enough, about a week before the Jamboree a Brigadier came into my office. The Civilian officer and I jumped to attention, but the Chief Engineer for Western Command stood the pair of us at our ease and asked if I was Brian Griffiths. I didn’t deny it. He asked what part I had played in the organization and I explained that I had taken notes attending meetings at County level, without letting on how many. He granted me leave to attend the Jamboree. It was a good job I had only f our days left to do, before my “Demob” The Chief Clerk of the office and R.S.M.at Chester Castle were unhappy that I had influenced the Chief Engineer, but it was worth it

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The crew who shot the film of the comings and goings of the Jamboree were very busy all day and every day. Sarg was busy at meetings and finding old friends, inviting them to see the Guardship in the middle of Powell's Pool. A Pulling Crew had to be maintained at all times. A telephone switch board had been installed in the after cabin. It had eight phone lines plus mine, also a typewriter and a primitive duplicator. The job in hand was exactly the same as the one I had left at The Command H.Q. at Chester. Typing and duplicating Minutes, similarly, results from events, It took a little organizing to see the camps and sights, I saw a lot of guests and they all needed tea and biscuits. Luckily my cousin was in the Galley. Each of us doing our own jobs, I have no idea how much David saw on the Jamboree..

There were 31,426 Scouts at the Jamboree from 88 countries were under canvas Sarg's part in this memorable event was to look after all water activities on the various lakes in Sutton Park and in particular the major carnival and displays on Powell's Pool. The Guardship was a special feature and over the course of the fourteen days 650 Scouters and guests came to the Guardship to see this unique training facility.

Late 50's early 60's

There were three Channel Cruises VALBERG GENESTA and another one, I was busy National Service and getting married. Also the energy needed to work at Wates on Multi-story blocks was a twelve hour day for three years.

1963

There was a crisis of leadership. Up till now Jos had been the Scout Leader and Mike and John Taylor Assistant S.L.s. I went along to as many meetings as my job would allow. Others in the frame were Pete Hall; Murray McKie; Tony Penall; Richard Hughes. In the advent of Jos taking on the County Commissioner's position, a new format of leadership was needed. The suggestion was that Pete Hall; Murray; Tony Penall and me, would each undertake to do a week each in rotation. I would do the first week. In the following week I received no confirming communication from the others, that they intended to comply with the arrangement, so I went along to make sure the meeting took place. So it happened I was Scout Leader with the others providing a substantial backing.

1966

Sarg retired. Jos Carver became Group Scout Leader. We all considered the move as inevitable, we were in capable hands.

1968

Went to Gilwell to complete the Wood Badge, It was an incredible experience, the pace and volume of information was awesome. I have the note book drafted at the time.

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1969

Jos found a fellow willing to start a Cub Pack. The venue was the meeting hall at the Presbyterian Church on the corner of Darwall Street and Hatherton Road. Ray Lewis and his wife Peggy worked hard at the group taking the boys here and there for about four years, but basic camping at Beaudesert or the Cabin always tested them to the limit.

1973

Ray Lewis was a fire Officer and while he was stationed at Walsall all was well, but upon his promotion and re-location he was forced to give up Cubs

I was asked to transfer from scouts to cubs and Janet, my wife, came along to keep us legal and to be another pair of eyes. Activities included puppets based upon Pelham, camping at the Cabin and on the Guardship, I had in the cupboards a quantity of old photographic paper and fixer so we made montage pictures. Hikes to Barr Beacon Observatory, semaphore. We transferred the Cub Meetings from Darwall Street to the Bluecoat Junior School on Spring Hill, meeting on a Thursday evening same as the Scouts who were meeting in the Chuckery Junior School. Bernard Hewitt came along to help.

John Valance became Scout Leader, The programme included making puppets along the line of "Pelham Puppets", I had a substantial amount of very old photographic paper and Hypo fixer so for the cost of a bottle of developer we made montages with bits of string, keys, nails ,buttons anything we could find. There were camps each year at the Wrekin and on the Guardship. It was at this time the water activities training scheme came under review. Jos under took to do this and write a new training manual. The task was time consuming so Jos asked me to be Deputy Group Scout Leader.

1978

Annual Camp on the Broads Boats Japonica 2;3;4;5; & Javelin

There appeared to be a natural progression of training and achievement. Boating skills learned at the pool and then a camp on the Broads to handle bigger boats followed by a cruise in the Chanel

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1981

February Our 70TH Anniversary. The Mayor of Walsall; the deputy Lieutenant of the County Capt Denis Dudley and the Field Commissioner were invited to Killock and we had a special dinner.

Broards Camp including the Group Committee. There were 12 boats in all and when rafted up for the evening in the various broads, for we were too many to tie up to the quays, it looked like Down Town Hong Kong with smoke and all.

1982

The first Gang Show



Then there were Gang Shows produced almost every Year until 1991. Upon Jos's demise the ready access to sound equipment and lighting was difficult. Frankly the driving force had disappeared. We needed a producer

Two new molded Rover Class Fiber Glass constructed boats were purchased. Cygnus was taken to a firm in Preston and a fiber glass mould was taken from her profile. When the wooden boats were commissioned from Martham Boat Developments The Leaders of the time took a plank of the gun whale, this gave a little less freeboard but made them more boy friendly for use on Powell's Pool and Bala. Jos was planning camps on the Dart. We decided that the extra depth would be useful for camps and activities on the Dart and Lyme Bay so 3 or 4 inches of free board were replaced on the new boats.

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The takings from the bar and lettings paid for them. They had timber thwarts and a stout timber reinforcement to the transom "Aries No 10 and painted with a green sheer stripe & Cygnus No 11 painted with a red stripe" More recently Walsall S S. were invited by the Scouts of America to attend San Diego Naval base and having attended and winning a few shields we were invited again, and again.



Ginger Beebee Peter Hall Jos with a pipe This is Tom Pace
Holding the flag Robin Webb with his hat on & glasses. sitting down in the corner
Also Murray Mac Griff Pennell

It was not long before the size of the group demanded a third boat "Pegasus" painted with a Blue Sheer. You will see from the group sketch above of the 1950's Bala camp and within the characters are Tom & Roy Pace. I never knew the cause of Tom's demise but according to the talk of the time he had only one topic of conversation the Third, so his family commissioned a new boat for us "Tom" Painted with a black sheer.

An American businessman Mr Koch had a two thirds size copy of the Americas cup made by Garrards It was handed over to the third as representing Sea Scouting, on the Terrace at the Houses of Parliament by Mr. Kock and Bruce George, The M.P. for Walsall. It is solid silver. We were invited to compete in a sailing race at Chicago on Lake Michigan. We came second according to the official prise giving but we know the winners"

The American Team who lifted the Cup, missed out the last mark.

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Admiralty Recognition

There is a scheme administered by the Admiralty for one hundred S.S. Groups in the country to receive Admiralty recognition, I am very happy to say Walsall has held this honour since 1942 The proof is a “defaced RED ENSIGN with the Admiralty crown & Scout emblem a Blue burgee, also a badge to be worn on our uniform.

Let's build our Head Quarters “KILLOCK”

The Group had always met in School Rooms and Halls until this moment, but there were other Groups and Organizations that wanted school halls and council facilities. The Scouts were an easy bunch to push about.

The big game on a Thursday Evening was “find the meeting”. A great deal of time was spent on the telephone, numbers were falling and the Sea Scouts were growing weaker by the moment.

There was about three and a half thousand pounds in the group funds and we owned a Rolls Royce 20 horse power hearse, well six members did. There was at this time a government incentive available whereby if you could put money on the table the Local Education Committee would double it and then the National Department of Science would re-double it.

The six members who owned the Rolls forfeit their shares and advertised it for sale in the right magazines, and Jos out bid every one This put about eleven thousand pounds on the table and in due course we attained 22 thousand and then 44 K.

An ex Scout and still active member of the Group Committee found out about a piece of ground in Longwood Lane by the canal, that was designated for Leisure Groups and outdoor activities Horse Ridding etc and Scouting, the canal would be useful. He drew up the working plans and he and his brother in law priced them. We could afford it. The Council gave planning permission and the gifts started to shower in.

One of the parents said “ I know where there is a shed which would store some materials, while you build the H.Q. Two of us went in a lorry to Hoylake on the Wirrel to fetch a shed for a site hut. Richard Hughes and I expected to just load it onto the lorry and come home. No. It was still in place. The two of us dismantled the 10ft by 24 ft shed, then loaded and drove back to Longwood Lane arriving at about eight o'clock, to be met by a dusky field full of people to very quickly put it back together, by the light of car head lamps. That is how we started.

The amazing part of the Killock construction was, each time we came to a particular point of building the place, one of the parents would say “I'll find a digger for you “; “I'll find some concrete”. “I've got a crane to put the steel work in place”. “I'll find some blocks for you”. “I've got a joiners shop to make that front door”. Well, when we were finished we had some money left over.

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At this time there were several groups looking for financial help and amongst them Brownhills Scouts who had rented property in Cemetery Road They had a fund to start the doubling routine, but at the last moment the landlord asked them to quit their H.Q. so that he could apply for planning permission to develop other parts of his ground. Therefore the fund was going begging and likely to be returned to the Government. The Scout District Commissioner asked all the groups in his area if we had any money. Yes! we had, and that's the way we funded and built the Half Deck.

Sarg's eventual demise left us with property in Little Gorway where we painted and repaired the boats. The Committee decided to sell the ground to the Residential Home next door and this provided the monies to build the large Boat Shed behind Killock. We didn't get so much help this time from the parents regarding materials and plant. The ground dug out of the foundations was placed in a circle to form the session circle one end of the lawn.

To dedicate our new Head Quarters, which were quite the finest in the County, we asked the Chief Scout William Gladstone, to come and reveal a plaque. The sun shone the weather was splendid and we had a fine day The Sutton crowd muscled in a bit with a radio mast and a lot of equipment so that the Chief could speak to his Staff in Geneva. He did manage but the real success of the day was the operator on the key, his morse code spanned the world, making several contacts with other scout groups internationally

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1990

I became G.S.L. The cigarette problem caught up with Jos.

The Guardship that was founded in 1944 and launched August that year came to the end of her days. Through contacts within the Group the Army was called and in their superior manner refused to listen to a crowd of Boy Scouts who had raised this ship several times before.. So by the time the Army had finished she was "flat packed" on the shore. No two pieces fastened together. An eleven ton truck was found the next day and the debris taken back to Killock for burning.

A group study was formed and through a generous gift from an old boy coupled with Lottery Money , Council grants and a very special book of available trusts and funds £90,00.00 pounds was raised. Tony Harrington again drew up plans and working drawings and we commissioned a new one from Roger Apply at Digless Dock in Worcester.

The Demise of POLE STAR 1990 to 1994

She was launched in August 1944, timber construction throughout, and at a time when security and shortages was of prime importance. Tongue and grooved doors and hatches with a simple ledged and braced format. In the vandal climate of the late eighties and the



timber rot from being 46 years old, she stood no chance of being made secure.

We refloated her several times with help from the Sutton Coldfield Fire Brigade, and at the last attempt the T.A. Army expressed a willingness to raise her. We laid on soup and tea and offered some advice on how we had raised her times before, but the officer in charge didn't want to know.

I earnestly advised that it was crucial to avoid the ship rolling when she freed from the mud, for a few sheets of cladding were missing from the

starboard side. You could not possibly pump out with these sheets missing. Well he didn't comprehend, or chose to ignore. She did roll and the only way to recover her was to drag the vessel through the mud to the shore. A sad sight. Next action was to put a cable around the hull and try to pull the wreckage onto the shore. The cable acted like a cheese wire and cut the top from the hull. So the wreckage was hauled onto the shore piece by piece, and flat packed, from there it was loaded onto a fifteen ton truck taken to Killock and burned bit by bit.



A sorry mess but rather inevitable trying to advise people who know
To look on the bright side she was in manageable pieces

And this is the crowd that did it.

So we built a new one.



Marking out the steel sheets at B&O Hulbert, Cinder Bank, Dudley.



The new pole star loaded and ready to roll.

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She is a good fit for the drive.

Ready to place her in the pool.



Nearly there.

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Under her own power. She is motoring, ready for training and paid for.



Up and running, a shot taken 1996 early one morning

There is a “video” showing the construction and launch. I stitched it onto the end of the Cabin Build