

## The Story of Gatehouse Scouts by John Russell

The Scouts were set up by Major-General Baden-Powell in 1908, and within two years had become a world-wide organisation. However, Scouts were only introduced to Gatehouse of Fleet in 1929, and registered in January 1932, with the Registration Number 13,598. The history of the Scouts at Gatehouse of Fleet is littered with abbreviation letters : the most common are :

G.S.M.	Group Scout Master	C.M.	Cub Master
S.M.	Scout Master	A.C.M.	Assistant C.M.
A.S.M.	Assistant S.M.	C.S.L.	Cub Scout Leader
S.L.	Scout Leader	A.C.S.L.	Assistant C.S.L.
A.S.L.	Assistant S.L.	V.S.L.	Venture S.L.
P.L	Patrol Leader	A.V.S.L.	Assistant V.S.L.
A.A.C.	Area Assistant Commissioner		

Presidents and Commissioners never had their titles abbreviated. `Masters' and leaders could be male or female.

Our earliest history of Scouts at Gatehouse of Fleet comes from William McMurray of Skyreburn, who writes :-

Founded in 1929 by Charles Langlands, school teacher at Gatehouse of Fleet Public School. The Scout Master was a Mr.Ainsworth, Deputy Manager of The Bank of Scotland. The assistant Scout Master T.Newton was a chemist with G.M.Stark of Gatehouse of Fleet. The Troop consisted of 16 members in 2 patrols of eight :-

	<u>Curlews</u>		<u>Pewits</u>
PL	Murray Hughan	PL	J.McConchie
S	J.Patterson	S	J.Fergusson
	T.Veitch		N.Hughan
	W.Sneddon		J.Grieve
	J.Pied		W.McMurray
	G.Gilmour		A.McInnes
	J.Girgan		J.McCormack
	W.Heron		F.Hay

Our first den was a small room behind Fleetvale garage house with a boarded up window and a stove that always smoked us out, with light from paraffin byre lamps. We later moved into the loft above the garages : this time no stove but still byre lamps. We finally moved to the basement of the Rutherford Hall before it was reconditioned, and half of it was used as a furniture store. When the hall was divided we were given one of the three rooms which was shared with the indoor bowling club.

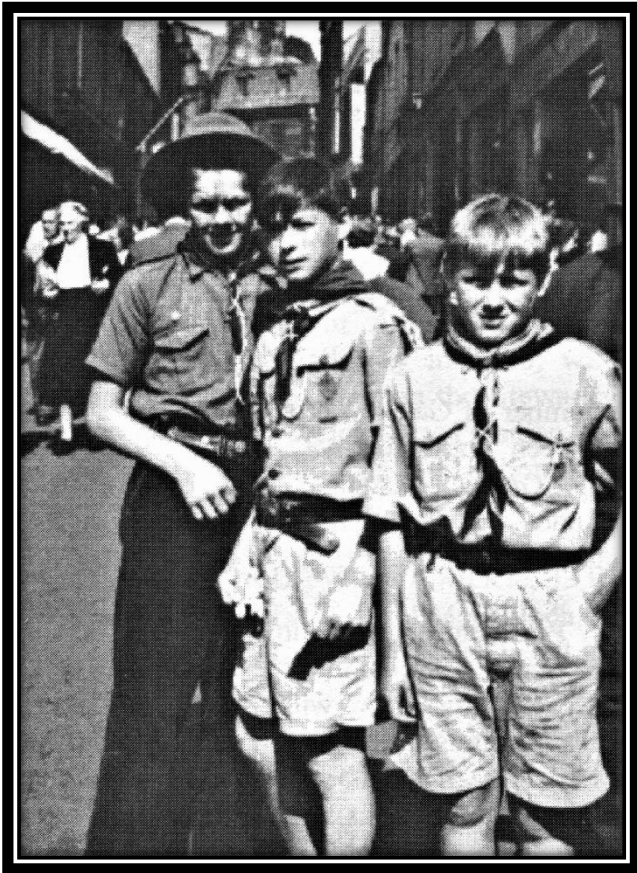
In 1932 both Mr.Ainsworth and Mr.Newton left to take up posts elsewhere and Charles Grieve, a painter with P.L.Tait of Gatehouse of Fleet, took over as Scout Master and Robert McMurray as Assistant Scout Master. Three patrols were formed, the two originals and the new Bulldog.

In 1935 Robert McMurray, Bruar Cottage, took over as Scout Master and Sam Heron Assistant Scout Master. They ran the troop until 1937 when Robert left to join the R.A.F. and Sam joined the Liverpool police. I myself carried on until 1939 when I joined the Army.

The Scouts seem to have gone into abeyance following the outbreak of World War II. In 1942, Constable Hugh McCorkindale was warranted S.M., and ran a troop of Senior Scouts who met in the old Cally School by Garries Park and in the Rutherford Hall.

They acted as messengers for the Home Guard. Amongst their numbers were Leo McClymont, George McCrone, David Cochrane and Francis Baillie.

In 1949, Hugh McCorkindale was followed as S.M. by William Hay, 6 Memory Lane, and Mrs Agnew, Anwoth Cottage, became the C.M. Colonel Rainsford-Hannay, Kirkdale, who was then the Commissioner for the Scouts in Galloway, granted permission for the Gatehouse of Fleet Scouts to use a field at Kirkdale Port for their summer camps. The Gatehouse of Fleet Scouts built the campsite. William Hay was warranted G.S.M. in December 1954, and the following April Miss M.A.Scott, 36 Catherine Street, took over as C.M. In January 1956, J.McCoull, 43 High Street, was warranted S.M. Miss J.McGaw, Garthaven, was warranted A.C.M. in June 1957, as was J.Riddick, 12 High Street, in 1961. This was a period of great activity in the scouts under the leadership of Billy Hay. Camps were held at Cargenbridge in 1954, Moffat in 1955, and Workington in 1956.



*Three Gatehouse of Fleet Scouts  
in the Dumfries Vennel — 1954.*

*Left to right  
Robin Halliday  
Jock Nichol and  
Gerard Macnamara.*

In 1957 the new scout hall in Digby Street was opened, built by Andrew Graham of Fleet Street. After the death of Colonel Rainsford-Hannay in 1959, Adam Maitland, Cumstoun, took over the post of Commissioner. A photo from 1960 shows some of the Gatehouse of Fleet Scouts at camp :-



*The Scouts present, from left to right, were Leslie Hunter, Billy Thomson, Andrew Dickson, Stanley Grieve, Billy McCartney and John Riddick.*

In 1967, the Scouts built the outdoor chapel at the Kirkdale Port camp site, dedicated by the Rev. McCorry of Kirkmabreck, in the presence of Mrs Rainsford-Hannay and Scoutmaster Billy Hay. The 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Troop again were the runners-up in the County Flag competition.

The 1960s, however, saw a decline in the number of Gatehouse of Fleet Scouts. John G. Macnamara, Catherine Street, who had been warranted A.C.S.L. in 1972, was promoted to C.S.L. for the Gatehouse of Fleet Group, replacing Robert Thomson who had been warranted C.S.L. in 1972. Brian Anderson, Market Hill Terrace, was then the A.C.S.L. Jack McCoull succeeded William Hay as S.G.M.

R.W. Rainsford-Hannay became the honorary President of the Galloway Scout Council by 1974, and President of the Stewartry Area Scout Association by 1979. In that year, Andrew Low, Castle Douglas, was the Area Commissioner, with Mrs R.M.B. (Ray) Ramsay, Mill of Borgue, the Assistant Area Commissioner. William Hay was the Assistant District Commissioner (Southern District). In about 1980, a wooden building was re-erected at Kirkdale Port camp site to act as a Scout hut, together with new fencing, and Nigel Scott became S.L. In 1984, John McConchie and John Macnamara took the gold medal in the annual orienteering competition in the Cally Woods, out of one hundred and twenty two entries.

As we have seen above, joint parties with the Guides were organised from time to time in the Scout Hall. At a party in 1985, Mrs Yvonne Gordon the Guide Division Commissioner for the Western Region presented the Patrol Challenge Cup to Stag Patrol, with Owl Patrol the runner-up, followed by Eagle Patrol, who won the Patrol Shield. The Tenderfoot Shield was awarded to Keith Watson. Mark Grieve won the Progress Cup, and Sean Wadsworth the Endeavour Cup. Stuart Davidson, Neil Pickthall, Ian Pickthall and Paul Dinnell won Sportsman's Certificates.



*Andrew Low presenting The Chief Scout's Award Certificates to Stuart Davidson (left) and Sean Wadworth (right).*

Following the death of Adam Maitland, Mrs Ray Ramsay was appointed Area Commissioner for Galloway in 1988, with Alan Hall, Laurieston Road, the Area Secretary, and J.G.Macnamara the Stewartry District Commissioner. R.W.RainsfordHannay continued as Honorary President : amongst the six vice-Presidents was Mrs H.Maitland, Cumstoun. The 1<sup>st</sup> Gatehouse of Fleet Scout Group's list of leaders read :-

S.L	N.M.Scott, 52 Riverbank
A.S.L.	A.McKie, 33 Riverbank
A.S.L.	J.McCulloch, 64 Riverbank
A.S.L.	S.McKie, 33 Riverbank A.Hay,
V. S.L.	6 Memory Lane Mrs
C. S.L.	C.McCulloch, 12 High Street
A.C.S.L.	Miss L.Jowle, Victoria Street

The Kirkdale Port camp site was by 1988 becoming a busy place as many Scouts remote from Gatehouse of Fleet were invited to use the site (and pay a rent!). Andrew Hay's fixture list for 1988, not including the times when the Gatehouse of Fleet Group would be using the site, read :-

2 <sup>nd</sup> July to 9 <sup>th</sup> July	1 <sup>st</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> Boat Troop, Johnston, Renfrew Galloway Area Youth
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> July	Club
23 <sup>rd</sup> July to 30 July	3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> Lancashire Scout Troop
29 <sup>th</sup> July to 5 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Ballamena Scout Troop, Co. Antrim
29 <sup>th</sup> July to 13 <sup>th</sup> Aug	123 <sup>rd</sup> Manchester (Scouts, Cubs & Ventures)
30 <sup>th</sup> July to 6 <sup>th</sup> Aug	4 <sup>th</sup> Leith Scout Troop, Edinburgh
30 <sup>th</sup> July to 6 <sup>th</sup> Aug	26 <sup>th</sup> Calder Valley Troop, Todmorden
6 <sup>th</sup> Aug to 13 <sup>th</sup> Aug	East Kilbride Scouts

20 <sup>th</sup> Aug to 27 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Scouts from Cheshire
20 <sup>th</sup> Aug to 27 <sup>th</sup> Aug	80 <sup>th</sup> Newcastle Cubs

Traffic was starting to cause concern to the trustees of the Kirkdale Trust : on one occasion some forty cars plus lorries and vans at the site.

In 1989, John Firth, Borness, joined the executive committee as A.A.C. General Duties, and Mrs V.Service, Muiryard, as A.A.C. Cubs : J.G.Macnamara had become Development Advisor for the Stewartry Area. The Galloway Area had an income of £7850, mainly raised from memberships and grants although the letting of the Kirkdale Port site was raising some £230: of this, some £2200 was remitted to Scout Head Office, £540 spent on assisting local activities, and about £400 on sundry expenses, leaving a healthy balance. During 1989, the Gatehouse of Fleet Scouts and Guides went to Craigencallie Hostel for a fun weekend in March, Bob Simpson, Minnigaff, organised 5-a-side football, Nigel Scott and Bob Pearce organised 'Discovery 89', and the Kirkcudbright Scouts camped at Newton by Mossyard, visited by the Gatehouse of Fleet Scout and Cub Leaders. Mrs Ray Ramsay retired as Area Commissioner at the end of August, succeeded by John Firth, Borness. A census taken early in 1990 showed that the 1<sup>st</sup> Gatehouse of Fleet Troop comprised :-

Beavers	Nil
Beavers Leaders	Nil
Cubs	13
Cubs Leaders	2
Scouts	26
Scouts Leaders	3
Instructors	2
Venture Scouts	1
V.S. Leaders	2

49

The number of scouts at Gatehouse of Fleet had grown to by far the biggest of any Galloway troop.

During 1991, a new Galloway Area Badge was introduced : Mrs Ray Ramsay became Badge Secretary. The Chief Scout visited the Galloway Area Scouts in that year, calling at Gatehouse of Fleet and at the Scout camp at Brighthouse Bay, in very poor weather. J.G.Macnamara had retired from the Executive Committee, but Alan Hall continued as secretary and Mrs Violet Service as A.C.C.Cubs. The 1<sup>st</sup> Gatehouse of Fleet Scout Group officials were :-

S.L.	Nigel Scott, 52 Riverbank
A.S.L.	Steven McKie, 33 Riverbank
A.S.L.	Alex. McKie, 33 Riverbank
V . S.L.	John McCulloch, 9b Digby Street
A.V.S.L.	Michael Kneeshaw, 10 Victoria Street
A.V.S.L.	Andrew Hay, 6 Memory Lane
C.S.L.	Miss Lynden Jowle, Victoria Street
A.C.S.L.	Miss Glenis Potts, Woodlyn



*The 1<sup>st</sup> Gatehouse of Fleet Cubs with the Chief Scout*

Back Row, left to right, Karen Wood, Steven McKie, the Chief Scout, Gerard Macnamara, Billy Hay.

Front Row, left to right, Robert Dodds, Michael Kirkpatrick, Garry McClymont, A.N.Other, John McConchie, Sean Telfer, Danny King.

By the time of the 1993 Executive Committee Meeting in November, Miss Potts was in charge of the Gatehouse of Fleet Cubs, John McCulloch in charge of the Gatehouse of Fleet Venture Scouts, and Nigel Scott the A.D.C.Wigtownshire : Mrs Ray Ramsay was still Badge Secretary, Alan Hall the Area Secretary, and John Firth the Area Commissioner. Expenditure was exceeding income, mainly due to a hefty £2 935 sent to Head Office. The Gatehouse of Fleet Cubs and Scouts had helped to line the route for the Queen's opening of the Tolbooth at Kirkcudbright, and the Gatehouse Cally Venture Scouts had helped Nigel Scott in organising an orienteering event in Cally Woods. During that year, Miss Sharon O'Rourke, 8 Ramsay Wood, joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Gatehouse of Fleet officials as a P.H., and Mark Grieve, Castramont Road, as an A.V.S.L.

1994 is the last year to be reported in this history. R.W.Rainsford-Hannay continued as honorary President of the Galloway Scout Council, with Sir Michael Herries, Mrs H. Maitland, K.McCrae, G.Mercer and the Earl of Stair his vice-Presidents. John Firth continued as Area Commissioner until August, when he handed over to Mrs Violet Service. Alan Hall continued as the Area Secretary, Mrs Violet Service the A.A.C.Cubs until she took over as Area Commissioner, Mrs Ray Ramsay as Badge Secretary, and seven other non Gatehouse District members of the executive. Nigel Scott continued as A.D.C.Scouts for Wigtownshire. The 1<sup>st</sup> Gatehouse of Fleet officials showed some changes :-

S.L.	Nigel Scott, 52 Riverbank
A.S.L.	Steven McKie, 33 Riverbank
A.S.L.	Alec. McKie, 33 Riverbank
A.S.L.	Keith Watson, High Borgue Farm
V.S.L.	John McCulloch, 2 Riverbank Wynd
A.V.S.L	Mark Grieve, Castramont Road
C.S.L.	Mrs Fiona Hesketh, Bleachfield
A.C.S.L.	Mrs Lynden McCrae, 4 Castramont Road

The Gatehouse of Fleet Cubs would meet on Thursday evenings in the Scout Hall, the Scouts on Friday evenings, and the Venture Scouts on the first Tuesday of each month. This was perhaps optimistic, as it was in 1994 that the Digby Street Scout Hall was given a thorough refurbishment. Tom Wilson was the chairman of the 1<sup>st</sup> Gatehouse of Fleet Scout Group, Patrick Whitford the treasurer, Nigel Scott still the Group Scout Leader, and Brian Davidson the trustee in charge of fund raising. The new design was prepared by R.Riddell of Ian D.Kerr & Co., and was estimated to cost approaching £40 000, partly raised by an appeal and partly by grants. In its new form, the old building facing onto Digby Street holds the committee room, equipment and games stores, and wash rooms. A kitchen and disabled toilet were fitted out in the link building. The refurbished building is suitable for and used by scouts, guides and army cadets. It was formally opened by Princess Anne, after the closing date of this history.

Nigel Scott who became Gatehouse of Fleet Scout Leader in 1980 writes :-

The Scout Troop had become the 1<sup>st</sup> Gatehouse of Fleet Scout Group with the introduction of Wolf Cubs with their own Scout Hall in Digby Street, where the Group still has its headquarters. Since 1980, the group has grown well, and now has four sections, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Venture Scouts, with a dedicated leader team totalling some seventy members. Many of our members have represented the group at national and international levels, and we are proud to be the first in the Galloway Area to :-

- Gain four 'Chief Scout Challenges'
- Camp with Guides
- Introduce girls into the group
- Have a visit from Princes Anne
- Manage the Area's camp site at Kirkdale Port.
- Operate an Area Scout Shop

After the closing date of this history, Nigel Scott was promoted to Area Commissioner for Galloway. Fiona Hesketh the Cub Leader has taken on the G.S.L. role. R.W. Rainsford-Hannay continues as honorary President of the Galloway Scout Council.

#### Principal References :-

1. The Stewartry Girl Guides, by Jean C.Gibson 1986
2. Stewartry Guide Association Annual Reports 1991 -1995
3. Discussions with Ramsay Rainsford-Hannay, Leo McClymont, Miss E. McDonald, Miss Evelyn Cochrane, Mrs Jacqueline Wadsworth, J.G.Macnamara, Mrs Mary Riddick, Andrew Low, etc.
4. Information from The Scout Association, Dunfermline
5. Press Reports