

# Inverkip Scout Group

celebrates its 80<sup>th</sup> year this year. The 85<sup>th</sup> Renfrew held their first meeting 80 years ago on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May 1927. The troop was started by Arthur Muir of Inverkip House who would become Commissioner for Renfrew County within the course of the next 8 years. In August 1931 the scouts began recording their weekly activities in diaries using sketches and photos. The following details are taken from those diaries, from scouts George Whan (our oldest surviving scout invested 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 35), Charlie Mitchell (invested 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov 39), Luke Masterson (Leader 1962 – 1983), Ian Cowe (1983- and Jim Brown.

1930



David 'Dykes' Crighton and Wattie MacFarlane (later coal merchant). The troop still met in the West Kirk hall when this photo was taken.

1932



Wattie and Dykes again, with Joe Mitchell on the right. Taken at Summer Camp at Milliken, Paisley. The scouts had by now moved their meeting place to Arthur

Muir's home at Inverkip House and would stay there for 19 years.

1934



The Scouts became Sea Scouts on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1933 and some new activities were introduced. This sketch shows them learning a marine rescue by launching a rocket with 180' of rope tied to it. They would soon be firing these over each others heads in the water, and would win a national Sea Scout competition using the technique.

1934 – Going to Paisley Baths at Summer Camp – White House in Johnstone



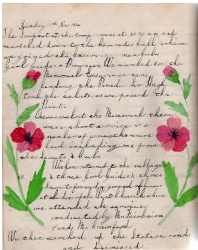
Scout John Mitchell at summer camp '34.



Below: The camp portrait. Note the 'Land Scout' guests from Langbank and Skelmorlie Scouts.



Armistice Day 1934. The troop paraded to the Cenotaph and took the time to sketch



this tribute. In the next few years many would go to war themselves. One of them would find his name added to the cenotaph.

1935

The Sea Scouts had 2 boats – the kayak pictured here and the Jolly boat pictured with the troop at its winter home at Inverkip House.



To Belfast in a Dinghy. Three local youths, brothers Tom, William, and James M-Knight had a rather exciting holiday this year. They set out from Inverkip in their 18-foot dinghy and sailed via Fladda lighthouse (south end of Arran) and Sanda lighthouse, across the Irish Channel in 34 days, landing at Cash-point, 54 miles from Belfast. Their boat has neither cover nor centre-board – a fact that prevented them from hoisting the lug-sail, and actually only 14 miles were covered under canvas. At Cashpoint, Mr Finlay and Mr McDonnell made them comfortable on the fishing smack 'Peace and Plenty,' while a two-day gale blew over, and they later entered Belfast where the Press treated them as cross channel swimmers! According to the skipper of the 'Peace and Plenty,' their's was the first crossing of the Channel in this way – a former boat having sank and whether it was this or the fresh herring that damped the boys' enthusiasm we do not know; at anyrate they sold the boat in Belfast and returned in something more substantial under the Burne-Jared flag.

This paper clipping shows 2 of the Sea Scouts (Tom and William) and their brother were ambitious seafarers



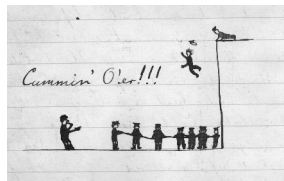
Ex-scout George Fraser



Everton Pool being built

1937

Main stays of the Scout programme throughout the 30's included Fire Drill, Ambulance Training and Signalling. Fire Drill took many forms including running out hoses to hydrants, ladder manoeuvres, and in this sketch – practising the Jump Sheet. Admittedly, the scouts do note that the 'Lightweights' did most of the jumping



Arthur Muir at Everton



Sea Scout at Inverkip Beach. In winter their white hat covers were handed in

1938

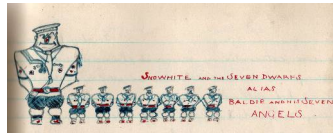
All the Fire Drill paid off. This letter is from London, Midland and Scottish railways, thanks the 85<sup>th</sup> for the actions of their scouts in putting out a fire at Ravenscraig Station.



King's Scout Ian Archibald caused a small media storm when he was presented to newly Crowned King George VI and Queen Mary in Edinburgh,



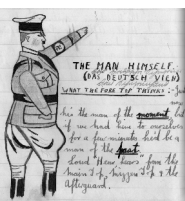
with Princess Elizabeth taking a particular interest in him. He is seen here in his press photo. Meanwhile to the artist of this sketch, he was still just 'Baldie'



Summer Camp '37 Colintraive

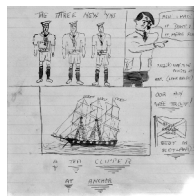


1939



The scouts poked fun at Hitler two months after WWII started. The text here reads:

"THE MAN HIMSELF WHAT THE FORETOP THINKS: Just now he's the man of the moment, but if we had him to ourselves he'd be a man of the past. Loud 'Hear, hears' from the Main Top, Mizzen Top and the Afterguard"



More Hitler fun. Also, the 'Three New Yins' pictured were invested this night 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov 39. They each became very familiar names around Inverkip – Grant Boyd, Charles Mitchell and Hugh Muir

1946

Arthur Muir died of illness in 1942. He was succeeded by Jack Plunkett (back left), and then by Kenny Mitchell.



Kenny Mitchell is pictured (right) at summer camp '47 with TL Frank Aitchison. Kenny would go on to become GSM until 1962.



The troop continued to meet at Inverkip House until 1950 when they moved into Inverkip Primary School.



Sea Scout Neil MacDonald Died of illness 3 years later in 1950 aged 16

1962

Luke Masterson, pictured below, succeeded Kenny Mitchell as Scout Leader. Over some months, the troop transitioned from Sea Scouts back to Land Scouts. Today's Scout Leader Jim Brown



(back left in this picture) was Inverkip's last Sea Scout, converted in 1963. By this time Gordon Kerr had taken over from Willie Plunkett as Cub Master. Gordon Kerr who was largely responsible for keeping the troop diary alive as a Scout in the 40's would continue to run the cubs for over 20 years.

1960's and 1970's

As Land Scouts again, the troop took up Hillwalking. Luke, with Ronnie Maxton and later with ASL Richard Seaton arranged many hillwalking and camping trip. Here Luke is pictured at Steel Falls in Glen Nevis.



The troop explored many other areas of Scotland including Tarbert Loch Fyne, Arran, the Lairig Gru, Rhum, Harris.



1977



This future leader was born. Camping already, even if he did still need his teddy

1980

When Luke became GSL in 1980, he was succeeded by Richard as SL until he married and moved away, to be replaced by Ian Cowe in 1983.



Meanwhile the cubs led by Ann Miller, Brian Elliott, Jim Lang and Wendy Yarr continued to expand. 3 of the cubs in this picture from 1986 went on to become Scout Leaders. Liz Campbell started the Beaver colony with Morag Cowe, and Joyce Brown started the Venture Unit.

1989



Ian Cowe's first summer camp was a Barge Trip in the Norfolk Broads.

Followed by a standing camp at Blackwaterfoot in Arran



1990



The 90's scouts struggled with tents. Pitching older ones inside out like

this Good Companion at Everton. They tried to wear more modern ones like this one in Arran. And eventually settled for making their own shelters like this winter bivouac.



On a more grand scale, with the help of skilled parents, the troop rebuilt an old ruin into what is now their bothy on the outskirts



of the village. When they're not at Everton, they are often to be found at the bothy.

More summer camps followed including this one at Great Tower in the Lake District.



This is our biggest contingent for a summer camp.

1992



When the Chief Scout visited in 1992, the Scouts won the Grand Gun Carriage race

This was also the year two 85<sup>th</sup> scouts joined the Area expedition to the Pyrenees



1995

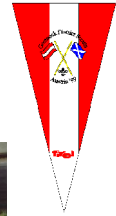
The scouts continued hillwalking, many



climbing the equivalent height of Everest one or more



times, abseiling and camping.



The troop joined the District trip to Austria in 1999 and returned for their own camp 3 years later in 2002

2000

After extensive fund raising and with the assistance of parents and Sir Houston Shaw-Stewart, the troop becomes fully



killed for the first time in its history. The tartan is Hunting Stewart in tribute to Ardgowan Estate.

2001

A group of Venture Scouts and leaders go parachuting to raise funds



They all go through with it

Another Everest challenge allows yet more scouts to experience winter hillwalking the Scottish mountains. Apparently sledges are a required safety item on these activities.



Scouts take a welcome rest in civilisation (Inverness) during their 2001 Minibus expedition.



They climbed a total of 13,511 ft in all corners of Scotland that week in miserable weather.

2002



Austria Piper Colin Murphy and Drummer John Cowe entertained over two

hundred Germans who belted out Scotland the Brave as loud as any Hampden crowd.



Austria contingent 2002

The modern day scouts have lost their sea legs as demonstrated by these 2 getting a tow.



The Fireman's badge these days is often kindly assisted by Greenock Fire Brigade who have laid on excellent courses for the boys.



These leaders raised £1030 for the troop by climbing the 3 peaks (Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon) in under 20 hours one day in May. No speed limits were broken during the event.



Beavers at Founder's Day Parade April 2004

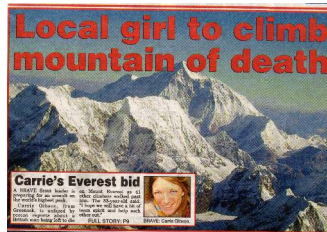


2007

By now Inverkip Scouts have met royalty and flirted with a Princess, they have been Sea Scouts and Land Scouts, they have laughed at Hitler and shot rockets at each other. They have built themselves a home and explored the world including Australia, Canada, Ireland, Austria, Germany, France, Spain and all round the home countries.



They have won national competitions, doused burning buildings and sailed to summer camp towing their boats behind them. They have jumped out of lofts onto jump sheets, and jumped out of planes with parachutes. They have walked in the Alps, Pyrenees, Himalayas, Andes and they have climbed Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon in under 20 hours. They have entertained hundreds of villagers in their annual Burns suppers and drawn tourists away from



Neuschwanstein Castle in Germany to hear the skirl of the pipes. They have climbed the equivalent height of Everest a great many times, and with ASL Carrie Gibson's attempt to become only the 3<sup>rd</sup> Scotswoman to summit Everest itself in May of this year, the adventures are set to carry on.

George Whan

Inverkip's Oldest scout. George featured in many diary entries in the late 30's. To the scouts of the day, he was known as 'His Magnificence, the Earl of Whan'.

