

As part of our centenary celebrations, we continue looking back over the years at various events and occurrences from our first century of existence. This series can also be found on www.edsc100.org.uk. – Frank Woods

100 Years Ago ~ On 20th June 1910, our District was Warranted by Headquarters. Our “Association Return” records that our “area” spanned from “the railway at Eastbourne to Lewes, from Lewes to Seaford and English Channel and Eastbourne”. We had five troops, five Scoutmasters, and 11 ASMs and Instructors. We had a total of 187 scouts (no cubs then, of course) which included three King’s Scouts and 26 Cyclist Scouts. Our first DC was Col. G. E. Even, C.B., our District Chairman was W. F. Wells and our District Secretary was D. C. Crisford.

80 Years Ago ~ A milestone was reached in 1932, when membership (just) passed the thousand mark for the first time at 1001 (991 in 1931). Figures then remained at this level for the ensuing two years – 1933: 1,165 (the all-time highest to date) and 1934: 1,055.

70 Years Ago ~ In his DC’s Report at the 1940 AGM, Lt-Col. W. J. Keen was particularly pleased to report that “Early in the last year the Cornwell Badge was awarded to Bob Scarlett of the 9th Troop. He had borne a long illness, with attendant operations, with the greatest cheerfulness and courage, and given as fine an exhibition as one could wish to see of the best Scout Spirit.” (*As far as I know, this is the only one ever awarded in our District.*)

60 Years Ago ~ In June 1950, a District Rally took place in the Grounds of Compton Place and was opened by “Gert & Daisy” (Elsie and Doris Waters); the Arena Programme included “Trek Cart Drill” by the 4th Eastbourne, “Highland Dancing” by the 6th Eastbourne, “Signalling Tower Erection” by the 18th Eastbourne (now 1st Anderida), “Tumbling and Gymnastics” by the 23rd Eastbourne, and a “Bull Fight” by 1st Willingdon; in the marquee was “Model Aircraft Construction” by the 1st Hampden Park’s newly formed Air Scouts (who, incidentally, made their one and only appearance in the 1950 census).

50 Years Ago ~ The first week of June 1959 was declared another “Scout Week”, this time in celebration of our Golden Jubilee. The week included a Sea Scout Display at Princes Park, a Thanksgiving Service (with the Eastbourne Silver Band) at Gildredge Park, a Handicraft Exhibition, a Film Show – “this you must not miss! . . . Films in sound and colour” – a Sports Meeting at The Oval, and a Grand Scout and Cub Rally and Jamboree Market in Gildredge Park, opened by Her Grace Mary Duchess of Devonshire.

45 Years Ago ~ Billed as “the BIG event of 1964”, was the Official Opening of Bushy Wood on Saturday 13th June, by our President His Grace the Duke of Devonshire; despite “a day of unparalleled mud and

rain”, the Duke’s comment on Bushy was “How fabulously marvellous”, and DC Donald Love praised “the loyalty and cheerfulness” of everyone who turned up on such a day.

30 Years Ago ~ In June 1982, our District’s contingent of 280 campers was the largest in the county to attend “Milestone ’75” at Broadstone Warren, which was “a great weekend – despite the weather”. Thanks were forthcoming from ACC(S) David Schildkamp, who said “It is nice to be able to ask a District for help at short notice, and Eastbourne came up trumps”.

- Also in June 1982, “Eastbourne Scouts’ visible contribution to the community” was completed – in the form of restoring the Long Man of Wilmington; this fundraising task was organised by District Secretary Peter Brook, and it entailed cutting the grass, wire-brushing the blocks and painting the Man – “all 236ft of him”. The event brought much publicity – on TV as well as in the Press – and raised a massive £1,800!

- Still in June 1982, the Kingfishers entered their first competition – “Sapphire Sounds” at Burgess Hill; despite competing against much more experienced bands, they did the District proud and managed to beat four of them, earning 7th place out of 11.

25 Years Ago ~ The highlight of 1984 was the “Chief Scout’s Visit” to Bushy Wood in June, when we were joined by our neighbouring Districts of Hastings, Senlac and Seahaven; this was the first visit of a Chief to Eastbourne, and DC Gerry Gillett felt that “the Chief’s visit was the most successful event ever staged at Bushy Wood”. The Chief, Major-General Michael Walsh, was engaged in a “tour of the County” which CC George Herbert described as “a real triumph”.

20 Years Ago ~ Another visit from another Chief Scout in 1992, this time at the “Gathering of the Clans” at Bushy Wood. ADC(C) Christine Skinner reported: “An incredible weekend, the youngsters enjoyed every wet minute of it and we were all inspired by Garth Morrison, Chief Scout, as he toured Bushy Wood in a soggy state.”

10 Years Ago ~ It was entitled “Millennium Madness” and was described as “the craziest sleepover of all time”. . . . In June 2000, nearly 200 of our Cubs were privileged to spend a whole night in Fort Fun! All of the rides stayed open until 10p.m. and activity bases ran throughout the night, culminating with a dawn camp-fire sing-song and balloon-release. Organised by retiring ADC(C) Darrell Harris, the event was voted “a brilliant success”.