

1st FRESSINGFIELD SCOUTS  
1967-1978

My family moved to MORHAM in 1966. Some time later CHARLIE ~~VINCENT~~<sup>VINCENT</sup> turned up and said "I've heard you have been involved with Scouting. Can you help us?"

I started running the scouts in late 1967. At the time Charlie was running CUBS, SCOUTS and was COSC at Fressingfield.

For several years we met at Sancroft Hall but with no storage everything had to be carried to and from by car.

I ran the group singlehanded for the first few years. I did have a young assistant for a short while, but his family left the village. Later on Michael Knights an ex Eye <sup>Scout</sup> came to help as ASH.

Initially there were about 6 scouts but this grew to about 18. Most were local lads from the village but later we had lads from Weybread, Wingfield and Worbyworth.

Camping wise we were fairly well equipped with ex army type heavy Patrol tents, a store tent and extensive sets of Billies etc. I stored all this in a loft space at my parents house in Morham.

I also had a lot of help during camps and other activities from my sister ALISON (an ex Sea Ranger Guide). She acted as QM and 1st Aider.

We always adopted an economical method of running the Troop. Apart from SUBS we held 2 Tumble Sales in Sancroft Hall each year which kept the group afloat.

We aimed to do a lot of Practical activities when possible. We had weekend camps throughout the year. at places such as.

- HORTHAM HALL. (Peter Harkin)
- Mrs Sills at BRUNDISH
- The Goodwins at ~~Upper~~ <sup>SYLEHAM HALL</sup> ~~by~~ ~~road~~

- We also did a number of short hikes instead of evening meetings

We always had wood fires, sometimes patrol cooking and introduced the boys to cooking a range of foods.

At that time map-reading, compass use; knots and 1st Aid were the key winter activities as well as active games.

- BRITISH BULLDOG WAS favourite but was difficult when youngsters (often small and shy) came up from CURS.

At the time I started THORNDON Scouts had just ~~been~~ closed leaving EYE and FRESSINGFIELD as the only groups in the MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT. As a result we often joined up with SAXMUNDHAM and ANDERBURGH groups. Some time before officially coming part of the Aldborough District. Why we did not join up with FRAMLINGHAM Scouts I don't know. LEISTON SCOUTS, ~~did~~ ~~join~~ ~~to~~ ~~in~~ ~~on~~ ~~some~~ ~~activities~~ ~~the~~ were already part of the Aldborough District

There was some talk of Eye Scouts joining MENDLESHAM SCOUTS. in the STOWMARKET District, but they chose to join ANDERBURGH district instead.

The District Commissioner was Rev. E.H.O. BENNETT. He was a Keep Scout, but was always busy in his Parishes and for the East Suffolk Blind Association. He joined us when we joined the Aldeburgh District (I don't remember his role). However he was not with us for too long as he died suddenly from overwork and exhaustion.

Although a small group with only 15-18 boys we tried to get involved with County Activities. We entered a made up Patrol in the County Cooking Competition on several occasions, coming 3rd on one year.

We aimed to have a weeks camping Adventure every Summer. I remember we went to:

- Newbyen in Scotland.
- A Scout Campsite in N. Wales.
- AYSGARTH in Yorkshire.
- \* - MATHASKE in Norfolk. (Twice)

with EYE SAX ALDEBURGH SCOUTS We often hired a crewbus from a Coach Company in Eye. The boys gear was in soft bags so could be stacked under the seats. On many occasions it was a combined camp with boys from Eye or Saxmundham or Aldeburgh.

One of the most memorable trips was to North Wales. We borrowed Aldeburgh Scouts crewbus, fitted a towbar, borrowed a trailer and drove overnight. The

vehicle was somewhat underpowered and the speed dropped dramatically in hilly country. On the motorway the lorries passed us on all the hills and we overtook them downhill, much to the delight of the boys and lorry drivers alike.

The final lanes near the North Wales site were quite steep - too steep for the bus + trailer. So we stopped, the boys + my assistant got out; disconnected the trailer. I drove the van up the hill without passengers and trailer.

The Scouts then pushed the trailer up the hill. Among the other adventures was breaking the handbrake so that whenever we stopped as in the carpark at the base of SNOWDON; one of the boys got out and put blocks of wood each side of the rear wheel.

On the return journey we went via SNAKE PASS. By the top there were more than 100 vehicles behind us.

Quite an Adventure!

At one point several boys went to Kero camp. (I don't remember the details)

The highlight of my time as SL was to send a scout to the World Jamboree in Japan. The troop did some of the fund raising but most came from the boys grandparents. He enjoyed himself but sadly left the group soon after his trip.

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~~My~~ family moved. The group used to take part in Fressingfield annual fête and for several years we built an aerial runway for anyone to use. No H+S or qualification issues in those days!

When we had to move from Sencroft Hall after it was renovated there was doubt where we could meet. Fortunately we were offered the Methodist Church Hall. It was rather small, not very warm and had a flaky wooden floor. However I was glad to be offered it and it has been "base" since then.

I had to spend the odd Saturday morning repairing broken windows (ball games) and sorting out the door, etc

I left the group when I got married and moved to Debenham in Spring 1978.

After I "retired" I was persuaded to help run a Scout/ Guide camp at a site at Aldeburgh, called 'GORSE 81'. The camp included some Scouts from Swodens. (leaflet enclosed)