

Project: Scouting through the Decades: A Century of Adventure Respondent: Eric Steadman Year of Birth: 1966 Age: 59 Connection to the project: Cub, Scout, & Venture Scout 1970s/ 1980s Date of Interview: 2 Feb 2025 Interviewer: Gillian Alexander Recording Agreement: yes Information & Consent: yes Photographic Images: no Length of Interview: 44 minutes 20 seconds Location of Interview: Davidson's Mains Scout Hall		
Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics) Summary Time (from: mins/secs)	<b>Time Coded Summary/ Transcript</b>	Transcribed Extract (from-to: mins/secs)
00.00 – 01.10	<p>The Respondent is introduced and thanked for attending the Interview. He was asked where he was born and where he grew up, to which he responded that he was born at the Elsie Inglis Hospital in Edinburgh and grew up in Silverknowes.</p> <p>He left for university and afterwards moved away to Surrey for some time before returning to live in Edinburgh.</p> <p>However, he returned down south and remained there, although he also lived in Stockholm for a couple of years in between.</p>	
01.11 – 01.18	<p>The Respondent is asked about his involvement with the 30<sup>th</sup> Craigmaldon Scout Group and his years there.</p>	
	<p>“So at the time it was the 30<sup>th</sup> Inverleith - that's how I knew it, and I started with the Cubs, that must have been at some point in the mid-seventies – I don't have in mind exactly when, was in the Cubs for a few years, moved on to Scouts, and then moved on to Venture Scouts, as it was in the day.”</p>	01.19 – 1.50
01.51 – 02.22	<p>The Respondent goes on to discuss that his involvement decreased when he left for university, but he would stay in touch when he returned home for the holidays, which took place around the mid-eighties. He explained that he was able to attend Venture Scouts when he was home from university.</p>	
02.23 – 02.33	<p>The Interviewer then asked what the Respondent remembered about a typical night when he was a Scout.</p>	
	<p>“We'd be here in the hall, there would be some opening formalities where we'd line up in patrols, and the flag would be run up the hoist and broken. We would typically in an evening, and don't ask me in which order, but a typical evening would maybe have three things, I would say – they'd be some sort of learning activity, whether that's map reading skills or knots, they are the ones that come to mind. Perhaps less obvious things, I remember once, maybe not so typical, there was a cooking challenge, we'd been told the week before we had a budget of 50p, and we had to cook for the patrol of six to eight people on 50p of food. <i>[Interviewer] In the hall?</i> [Respondent] In the hall on primus stoves and that sort of thing.</p>	02.33 – 04.41

	<p>So, you know, the activities could vary, and then, typically, we'd be outdoors for a bit. That could be some sort of quiz, or quasi-orienteeing thing, you'd be set a number of points round Silverknowes, D'Mains, or it tended to be D'Mains, Corbiehill perhaps. I honestly can't remember what they were, but I do remember a lot of running around the streets, you know, in a hurry, trying to tick things off, or whatever the things were. Then we'd usually finish off with some sort of game in the hall, so that could be British Bulldogs, or whatever, and then, at the end, we would line up in patrols again, and there would be a very short closing thing – the flag would be run down and that would be it. Later on, I think the older we got, sort of, particularly at Ventures, I remember the game was always football, everyone wanted to play football, which I was useless at, but it was a bit more varied earlier on."</p>	
04.42 – 04.45	The Interviewer goes on to ask if he remembers much about the Scout patrol he was in.	
	<p>"I was in the Falcons, so they were all named after a bird. So, what other ones can I remember? The Woodpigs – they were the Woodpigeons, there were others. I'm trying to remember the patrols – there were six Scouts, an APL – Assistant Patrol Leader and a PL – Patrol Leader or whether it was four Scouts? You know I can't remember – I have six in my mind, but whether it was six in total or six plus the two senior positions, I can't quite remember. That was the basic unit of organisation for activities, for doing things and therefore competing against the other patrols. So sometimes the activities would be competitive between the patrols here, scoring points and keeping a tally. I don't know if there was a tally over the year or whatever, but there was certainly, you know, a tally on for the particular activity on the night. So, just to give one example, I remember once everyone was lined up, the whistle would go, and you had to sit down when you thought a minute had passed. So you had to count a minute and sit down, and there were points for the closest one to sixty seconds, and that would have been scored by patrol.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> And these points would have been kept over a time period?</p> <p><b>Respondent:</b> I don't remember a sort of end-of-year 'this patrols won the trophy' or whatever, but that's not to say it didn't happen."</p>	04.46 – 06.26
06.26 – 06.37	The Respondent is then asked if he recalls whether there was pride and competitiveness between the patrols, to which the Respondent responds that he thought there was – he then goes on to discuss patrols at camp.	
	" You camped in your patrols, so each tent and each patrol had a patrol tent – I'm thinking of summer camp here principally, so there's a whole load of, you know, big, heavy canvas tents in the store room that slept eight people and you had your kitchen area, so you cooked, slept and did everything as a patrol on camp."	06.38 – 07.04
07.05 – 07.56	The Interviewer asked if the Respondent had ever been a Patrol Leader, to which he stated that he had been both a Patrol Leader and an Assistant Patrol Leader. He was asked if he felt that this was a privileged position, to which he replied that it was, but it was also a natural progression, as most older Scouts expected to reach that level.	
07.56 – 08.22	The conversation moves on to talk about inspections and then uniforms.	
	"In Scouts, we had a green shirt, woggle/necker, you know and sort of beige trousers. I do remember that the Scout Association not keeping up with fashion, because we had drainpipe trousers when everyone was wearing flares, and they finally caught up with us, gave us flares, as the rest of all moved drain	08.22 – 09.15

	<p>pipes, so it was all a bit of a out of kilter really [laughs] So, I think that was pretty much it, I don't remember a jacket and there was no hat, not at Scouts, there was at Cubs earlier, almost like a schoolboy hat in green but not at Scouts."</p>	
09.15 – 09.44	<p>He went out to say that he thinks they changed out of their uniform for games, but can't really remember the details. The Interviewer then asked what he remembers about 'moving up' ceremonies.</p>	
	<p>"You had to swear the Scout Oath as opposed to the Cub Scout Oath, which took place in the hall, you were inducted, I'm assuming this was a sort of once or twice a year thing, or maybe if other people joined incidentally, but I don't really remember much about it, but I suppose there would have been an intake of a few boys, as it was only boys at the time, and we would have all done it together that's what I recall."</p>	09.45 – 10.16
10.25 – 11.28	<p>The Interviewer asks if he remembers taking part in any other traditions, to which he doesn't recall the more formal traditions but has memories of Jumble Sales, Burns Night, and Halloween. He goes on to discuss Jumble Sales a little.</p>	
	<p>"It would have been, I suppose it was a once-a-year thing and they certainly happened here, in the hall here, but I think they also happened up at the D'Mains Church Hall, I think. So there would be, you know, it was the Scout Jumble Sale and you know, raising funds for the unit and I don't know how all the things to be sold were gathered in, I dare say the doors were just open and people brought stuff, but you'd be manning different stalls, so different boys would be given a stall to man. So it could be, you know, 'Guess the Sweeties in the Jar', or it could be selling some of the stuff that had been bought in. So, whether that was patrols or whether that was other groups, I honestly don't remember, but it was a big thing, you know, it was all very organised, and there were queues outside the door. As soon as the doors opened, everyone was in. There'll be other people making teas and coffees and things like that. That's something that certainly sticks in my mind as a sort of important point in the year, in terms of engagement with the wider community and raising money."</p>	11.29 – 12.54
12.55 – 13.11	<p>The Respondent was asked if he remembered any other Scout fundraising events, to which he replied that he recalled Scout Job Week, which had replaced Bob-a-Job.</p>	
	<p>What that meant for me was mostly just going to neighbours in the street with my Scout uniform on, actually going to people, my parents knew, you know, even if I didn't really know them and knocking on the doors saying 'You got any jobs?' you know, for example "You could weed this bit of the garden" or something like that and they would give you 50p or whatever, for the unit so, that's what I remember.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Was that something you did on your own initiative, or did you do it as a group?</p> <p><b>Respondent:</b> I only remember doing it on my own, maybe that's just how I chose to do it, or wanted to do it, but there was definitely a week that you went and did things – yes, Scout Job Week, I'm sure it was called."</p>	13.12 – 14.14
14.15 – 15.45	<p>The conversation then moved to the annual Burns Night, which usually took place on a Saturday night, and where he explained that parents and friends would come along.</p> <p>There would be haggis, neeps, and tatties, and there would also be dancing; this took place several years in a row.</p>	

15.46 – 16.29	<p>He felt that this was another event where community engagement was evident, as the Scouts cooked and served the meal under supervision.</p> <p>The Interviewer then asked if he felt the Scout Group had a positive presence within their community, to which he replied that they did. He was then asked about any other Scout events that involved the local community.</p>	
	<p>“So, the one community thing I do remember was at Christmas time, we took boxes of food to some of the old folks, so I think the local minister probably identified people in need, and we would take them a Christmas parcel. So, we were running around Corbiehill and D’Mains with boxes of food. Now I imagine the food was donated by parents and members, I can’t quite remember.”</p>	16.30 – 16.56
16.57 – 17.21	<p>He goes on to remember other Scout trips to places within the locality, including Edinburgh Airport and a biscuit factory.</p>	
	<p>“In those days, we got into the control tower, and it would never happen now, but we were in the control tower as they’re talking down planes and things. And I remember a trip to the McVities Biscuit Factory, so we had a tour of the factory, over Sighthill way, and still might be for all I know, and we all came back with free packets of biscuits [laughs] couldn’t be better really!”</p>	17.22 – 17.46
17.47 – 19.22	<p>The conversation moves on to ask if the Respondent recalls any of the leaders, to which he says certain leaders were key in planning and running the nights. He felt it was quite a young Scout leadership team, mostly in their twenties, with a couple of older members as well.</p> <p>The conversation then turned to extracurricular Scout activities.</p>	
	<p>“So you know, there would be walking, certainly in the Pentlands, there was a Scout base up that way, so there was at least a couple of years we were up at Bonally for a couple of days, and I remember building a big zipline and then other groups, other troops who were camping at the same time that, you know, they were then going on it and so on. So that I think was fairly often, or at least it happened more than once.”</p>	19.23 – 20.02
20.23 – 20.28		
	<p>“Just when you came in, there was this room off to the left, which we never went into until a certain time of the year. I'm gonna come back to that [laughs], and then you came in, here was the main hall where you came in, and the hall lay to your left, and I think there was probably a fire exit at the end and then the offices on the door on the right, just as they still are. What I strongly remember is that wooden benches ran the exterior of the hall, and they were sort of benches you could store things in. So, they had a lifting lid, and there would have been, I think, each patrol had its own locker or its own bench, as we had staffs and things, and they may have been kept in there. If you were running around playing football and misjudged it, you could bang against the edge of one of these things and regret it. And then I think it was fairly, I was going to say rustic, but that’s the wrong word, rudimentary, I think, it was a basic structure, and I remember there were one or two offices, a kitchen, much as there still is, I see. The area I mentioned we only went in once a year, was where all the camping and tent equipment was kept. We would go in when we came back from camp or were going to camp to retrieve that stuff, but it wasn’t routinely used.”</p>	20.29 – 22.16
22.17 – 23.56	<p>The Respondent was asked about the kinds of games played in the Scout Hall, and he believed that football goals were possibly painted on the wall and that they had basketball hoops. He remembers that most of the games were mainly chasing and running sprints, and usually didn’t require much equipment.</p>	

	<p>There was a lot of football played, which wasn't his favourite, but he did remember that a variety of games were played – he names British Bulldogs as one of these.</p> <p>He was then asked if he remembered playing any outdoor wide games, to which he replied that he did in D'mains Park during the summer.</p> <p>He also remembers participating in activities in the park and recalls some of them.</p>	
	<p>"I remember one evening we went up with a whole load of staves and things, and basically made, sort of, rolling catapults and were catapulting bags of flour or eggs, or something like that around, so that was a favourite location. Corstorphine Hill, we went to, not quite so often, but on occasion, in particular if we were going to do things like abseiling or there would be little orienteering challenges, or at least of that nature, set up, so that was Corstorphine Hill, again, probably more in the summer months, I would think. But they have the two locations that stick in my mind."</p>	23.57 – 24.31
24.32 – 24.36	The Interviewer asks about the abseiling that took place with the Scout Group.	
	<p>"Yes, in the quarry up there, I don't think we did it every time, but there were times all the equipment was taken up there, yes, that was fun. I remember one mishap where a length of the rope was misjudged, but luckily nobody came to any harm</p>	24.37 – 25.03
25.04 – 26.55	<p>The conversation then moves on to badge work, and if the Respondent remembered anything about working towards any badges. He was pretty sure he had done the First Aid Badge and the Mechanics badge. He went on to explain that one of the leaders knew someone with an old car and was willing to let four or five Scouts work on it for their Mechanics badge. He believed he must have had more, but could not recall which ones, although he remembers that the Scouts mostly got to choose which badges they could work on. He remembers getting his Chief Scout's Badge and the Venture Award (which he achieved as a Venture Scout), but didn't go on to do the Queen's Scout Award.</p>	
26.56 – 29.17	<p>The Interviewer then asked if the Respondent attended the Group with friends, to which he said he did. He explained that most of the boys who attended were from the local area, mainly Silverknowes, Corbiehill, and Davidson's Mains. He mentioned that, as there was a Scout Group in Cramond (which may have been Scouts, Sea Scouts, or both), there were fewer boys from that area. He said that sometimes groups were competitive with each other, but not necessarily just between the local ones. The Interviewer asked about the Scout Group competing at a District level with other groups, but he could not remember being involved in this. However, he did remember at least one visit from the District Commissioner. He also did not attend any Jamborees; however, he did recall an event of that nature while he was in Cubs.</p>	
	<p>"They had a Father and Son Camp, I'm going to say Fife, but anyway, it was north of the river. It was people from all over Scotland there...massive. You went with your dad, basically, and it was a two or three day thing, and I remember the weather was blazing hot, so maybe 1976, because, you know, that was the summer of you know... so there was a lot of sunburned people running around. <i>[Interviewer] And did many attempts from this Troop. Do you recall?</i> [Respondent] Certainly some others did, I think there was quite a few, actually, you know, I can certainly remember other friends with their dads being there, let's put it that way, yeah."</p>	29.18 – 30.00
30.00 – 30.22	<p>The conversation then moves on to talk about Scout Camps at the ones that stick out in the Respondent's mind. He mentions the ones that stick in his mind.</p>	

“We were basically in a farmer's field near Loch Earnhead, you know, in the patrol tents I talked about earlier. We were there for a week, and I remember we climbed Ben Vorlich, did lots of other things and then Kingussie sticks in my mind, so we were up there. I think I must have been APL or a PL by then, I think, I can't quite remember which. I remember that being quite a nice site – You know, we didn't go to a campsite, we went to a field, you know, and you dug your toilets, you dug your cesspits, that sort of thing.

**Interviewer:** That was the Troop that was responsible for doing that?

**Respondent:** Oh yes yeah, sorry, I didn't dig in, you know, we had chemical toilets, but yeah, you know, you did dig pits for the rubbish and stuff like that, and the cooking debris and sort of poured it away and filled it in afterwards. There wasn't a shower block or anything like that.

**Interviewer:** How did you get to the camps?

**Respondent:** There were minibuses. We went in minibuses, so where did they come from? I think maybe borrowed from a school or something, possibly, I don't know. I'm pretty sure we went like that, rather than parents taking us there.

**Interviewer:** And bringing all the equipment with you?

**Respondent:** We took all the equipment, I mean, I think the leaders really sorted that out, I don't remember...I remember when I went into that room, when I got into that room, I talked about earlier, I was definitely at the older end by that stage, I must have been an APL or PL. I think it was probably the leaders of the APLs and PLs who did the kit. Some of it was, I mean, it wasn't exactly wild camping, but I remember at least one of these sites, you know, there was no fresh water, we had to get water out of the river and stick puritabs in it before you could drink it. It wasn't like we were going somewhere that had running water, so that's just how it was done.

**Interviewer:** Was each patrol assigned a certain job, or were you just responsible for your own patrol?

**Respondent:** You're basically responsible for your own patrol, so you have the tent, and then a fly sheet with a cooking area, and you would cook your stuff in patrols, you know, and the leaders would rotate around the patrols for meals. So you had to entertain, or in inverted commas, “host” one of the leaders, you know, for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and they would move around. So, you were cooking for yourself, and one or maybe two leaders as well.

**Interviewer:** So, you must have been quite capable to be able to cook for your group?

**Respondent:** Yeah, well, I mean, you learned, you know, from the older boys and over time, you know, you learned how to do it, basically. I mean, I don't think it was complicated food; it was barbecues and pots of water boiling. You know, boiling stuff

**Interviewer:** Building your own fires?

	<p><b>Respondent:</b> Oh, yeah. Yes, I mean, essentially there were things fire pits and, but yes, oh yes.”</p>	
33.43 – 37.50	<p>The Respondent was asked about camp activities and routines, to which he replied that there were. They usually gathered in the morning for flag break. He thought perhaps the flagpole was a couple of staves lashed together, but he was unsure.</p> <p>The day's activities were often a mix of on-site and off-site events, including various activities such as cycling, swimming, and raft building. He remembers once being given a cooking challenge where they had to skin and cook a rabbit. He remembers that there was always a flag-down ceremony and a campfire around which they would sit most nights. He was asked if he remembered any campfire songs, to which he named the classic ‘Ging-gan-goolie. ’ he also recalled that he remembers being told it was written for the Troop about a Dutchman called Van Der Beck and his sausage-making machine. He also had vague memories of Scouts performing a skit – perhaps singing a song, telling a joke, or sharing a story.</p> <p>He thinks his favourite camp was at Loch Earnhead, perhaps because this was his first camp, but overall, he enjoyed and looked forward to camps.</p> <p>The conversation then shifted to community traditions, and although he couldn’t recall much about participating in the Gala Parade as a Scout or at Remembrance Sunday, he was asked if he had any memories that made him feel a sense of accomplishment as a Scout.</p>	
	<p>“Well, I certainly felt I learned a lot. I think it is more of a gradual process, rather than a moment. But I think there are all sorts of practical skills that I picked up.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> You talked about going on to do mountaineering. Do you think Scouts kind of led you on that?</p> <p><b>Respondent:</b> Well, it was complimentary, just, you know, practical things like how to read a map, practical things like knowing how an engine works, even though I never used that, you know. But I think some of the things you learn - building structures, lashing bits of wood together and whatever, well, you know, it helps. The sort of improvisation, in a way. When you know you’ve got some DIY project going wrong at home, it's like, how can I, how can we work around this and come to a solution? I mean, I'm not saying it's directly transferable, but I think, you know...I still really enjoy camping. I go, I probably only go a couple of times a year now, but I do it with my friends, and we go cycle camping - so, taking tents on the bikes, whatever, and we are going to places where there is running water, but it's...there's something about, you know, going off a little bit, you know, out of the comfort area and being able to cope with it. I think it's left me, you know, that's something that's good... It's given me, or at least strongly, strongly supported it.</p> <p>But I think that's been a gradual thing, you know, gradual reinforcement over several years in the Troop.”</p>	37.51 – 39.45
39.46 – 40.42	<p>The Respondent is asked if he is still in contact with anyone from the Troop, to which he responds that he still sees one person.</p> <p>He's then asked about his thoughts on the current Scouting movement and whether it remains relevant today.</p>	
	<p>“I think it's very relevant, my son went to Scouts, he’s finished up now, but we were very keen supporters of that. I think it is different, no doubt. I mean, you can observe that from the outside. I think there's probably, like the rest of society, I’m guessing a bit less risk-averse, and this may be less unforgiving sometimes. You know, I think there was a bit of a sink and swim, you know,</p>	40.42 – 42.26

	<p>which is... which is good if you swim, but, you know, doesn't suit everybody. So, you know, you could look at any institution and say it's adapted in similar ways. I would say I'm not sure if the Scouts have adapted any more or less than anybody else.</p> <p>You've gone with the flow, I suppose, as you would expect. So, I don't know, I think it's still highly relevant, you know, I hope that the members now are getting just as much as I got out of it. I mean, they would have it in no doubt different ways, but, you know, hopefully they are."</p>	
42.13 – 42.40	<p>The Interviewer asks if he has any thoughts or memories of the 30<sup>th</sup> that he would like to share.</p>	
	<p>I do remember Halloween... Halloweens were a special night, yeah, I mean, it's the silly things, but, we had, you know, various games, or whatever, but the one thing I remember, that just stands out was the line of string, a bun or a roll on the end of each string, slavering of treacle, and you had to, you know, hands behind your back, eat the bun without getting the treacle over your face and you just about got it, and the leader would jiggle the line [laughs] and after that, you had to dook for apples, but they were in flour, you know, so you came up with all the flour on your face [laughs]</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Were you dressing up for Halloween, do you recall?</p> <p><b>Respondent:</b> Can't remember, but I do remember faces covered in treacle and flour and just general silliness.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Okay, a spin-off from that, were the Scouts expected to clean the hall at the end of a night?</p> <p><b>Respondent:</b> Oh, yeah. Ooh, I might be talking out of time, but I think one patrol had that duty each night, and then it rotated among the patrols. So, yes, I remember running, going around with broom and mops afterwards, so I'm pretty sure that was, you know, it's the Falcons tonight. Now, whether that was different from Halloween is such a spectacular mess, I don't know, but yeah, that would have been how that was done."</p>	42.41 - 44.14
44.15 – 44.20	<p>The Respondent was then informed that the Interview had ended and thanked for his time and for sharing his memories with the project.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div>	

