

<p>Project: '100 years of Scouting: 30th Craigmmond Scout Group Oral History Project' Respondent: Gareth Alexander Year of Birth: 1973 Age: 51 Connection to project: Cub & Scout Leader 2010s/2020s Date of Interview: 23/06/2024 Interviewer: Izzy Rae & Melissa Goodacre Recording Agreement: Yes Information & Consent: Yes Photographic Images: Yes Length of Interview: 16.14 Location of Interview: Davidson Mains Scout Hall Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)</p>		 <p>Scouting Through The Decades: A Century of Adventure. (30th Craigmmond Scout Group Oral History Project)</p>	
Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)	
00.32	<i>Can you describe the community where you grew up?</i>		
	<p>"The first five years of my life was in Ireland, then I moved to Cumbernauld, and I lived in a flat there, and we had friends from all over the world. Above us, we had an Iraqi family, and that was quite strange because one day, when I was about eight, my best friend was Alli from upstairs, he came out in an Iraqi soldier's uniform, and I was told that he was being enlisted into the Iraqi army.</p> <p>Not long after that, I moved to Singapore, and I lived in Singapore for two years. I did Scouting before I left here. I was a Cub, and then I left to go to Singapore, and when I came back, I became a Scout for about six months, and the Scout troop closed. I remained living in Cumbernauld until I went to university and left home."</p>	00.3301,37	
01.38	<i>Why did you become involved with the Davidsons Mains Scout Group?</i>		
	<p>"Well I actually just live round the corner and every Monday evening I'd be walking by the Scout hut and see them all filing in and out and when I moved through here I had a young son, so when he turned six I tried to get him into the Beavers and there was no spaces, so I offered to volunteer to try and see if more volunteers would mean more Scouts could get in and thankfully my son joined the Beavers and I became a Cub Leader."</p>	01.39-02.16	
2.17	<i>What were your first impressions of the Scout group?</i>		
	<p>"I thought it was very good. The Cub Leader that I joined was Craig Childs. He was very good, he was a very good Cub Leader, and he became a very good friend, and we had lots of fun."</p>	02.20-02.34	
2.35	<i>Who did you go to Scouts with and what memories do you have of them?</i>		
	<p>"Well, for the first year, I just came by myself, and I joined Craig, and we ran lots of activities. Thankfully, after about a year, my son Connor became a Cub, and so I came with Connor, and he was a Cub here for two and a half years and moved on to Scouts. Then, when he left, my other son, Jacob, joined the Cubs, and I did two and a half years with him as a Cub."</p>	02.39-03.05	
03.06	<i>Do you remember attending any camps while in the Scouts?</i>		

	<p>“Oh yes, lots. One of the first camps that I organised, I’m actually very proud of it, was a Star Wars-themed camp. We did it at Fordell Firs with some lightsaber battling. We couldn’t find anybody to teach us lightsaber battling, so we got a kendo instructor to come along. He came along in his full kendo armour; he dressed me up in all the kendo armour, and everyone in the Cubs took great delight in hitting me with the kendo sticks. We built a kind of chariot out of pioneering things and had pod races with them. We did bottle walking with them, a thing that we called the one kilometre universe where you place a pea at every four steps to represent the planets and then by the time you get to Saturn and Jupiter you are walking about seventy or eighty steps and over the whole solar system you end up walking a kilometre which I thought was really interesting but it didn’t seem to hold the Cubs interest very long. We also did stargazing that night, staring up into the dark night and seeing some constellations. I really enjoyed that camp.</p> <p>I did some brilliant camps, Loch Goilhead as well, we did burn walking, raft making, a really, really, good camp, that one.”</p>	03.08-04.54
04.55	<i>Please tell us more about another favourite camp you’ve been on?</i>	
	<p>“I’ve done so many, I’ve probably been to every campsite in the east of Scotland. I guess one that was quite nice was last summer at the group camp, and we all went to Auchengillan and that was the only Scout camp that I ever went on as a child because it wasn’t that far from where I worked. Cumbernauld to Auchengillan wasn’t that far. I went there as a Scout; there was only one dormitory there, there was about thirty of us, and one of the older Scouts was playing Billy Connolly all night. So that was my first introduction to Billy Connolly as well.</p> <p>So, it was quite nice to bring everybody back, and I brought my two sons to Auchengillan, showed them where I slept at ten years old. It was a much better camp this time, though. When I went, they didn’t have canoeing, they didn’t have all the bases that they had, all we got to do was a night hike, where we had to run in the dark from one end of the campsite to the other, that was about two kilometres in the pitch black.”</p>	04.58-06.20
06.21-06.27	<i>Did you ever attend any Scout Jamborees or International Scout camps, and if so, what do you remember about them?</i>	
	<p>“I haven’t done any international jamborees; I wish I had done. Actually, that’s why I joined the Scouts, my big cousin went on a jamboree, and I was so jealous, that’s what made me look out for my local Scout Troop, and I went and joined, but there wasn’t enough Leaders to do really, really, exciting things there, then the Scout troop folded.”</p>	06.28-06.52
06.53	<i>What were your favourite experiences when in the Scouts?</i>	
	<p>“I think the first camp that I ever organised was quite an interesting one; we did an overnight in Deep Sea World. We slept in the tubes with sharks overhead and even with all the lights out you’d be surprised how much the moon lights up the water and you can see the sharks, they never stop swimming, that was quite spooky but it was very, very, hot once we turned out all the lights to try and get everybody quite, the air ventilation was turned off so it just got warmer and warmer. A lot of Cubs in a tube.”</p>	06.55-07.43
07.44	<i>Have the Scouts changed since you were a child? If so, how?</i>	
	<p>“Well, one big difference when I was a Cub was I had a really itchy jumper and this really strange woollen hat, it was a wee peaked cap with stripes on it, and I don’t think the Cubs wear hats anymore. So, the uniforms definitely changed. I don’t remember doing many badges because we had quite a small Cub pack, but I think the activities are much better now ad I</p>	07.49-08.38

	guess one of the other things is Scouts don't do <i>bob-a-job</i> anymore. I remember every six months or so we had to go out and knock on the neighbours' doors and ask if they had any wee jobs, you'd do them for 5p."	
08.39	<i>Can you sum up what you think is the most important thing about the Scouts?</i>	
	"The thing I like about Scouts is introducing young people to lots of different things and then hopefully triggering some interest in some of them, and they can go off and learn how to be mountain climbers or learn to be astronauts or whatever, and so we introduce them to lots of different things, and they go and explore those, or whatever they fancy."	08.46-09.21
09.23	<i>What is one of the most challenging things you've had to face as a Scout Leader?</i>	
	<p>"I think Covid was quite hard, trying to do Scouting while everybody was stuck indoors and actually at that point I was quite used to just turning up and running a night but I'd like to say I got quite good and quite comfortable with how the nights were going to run, do some teaching, do some activities, play some games and everybody would go home, but all of a sudden all you had was people on the end of a camera and on a screen. I had to go and try and get them to do stuff, but then there were other things that became really easy, cooking nights for example in a Scout hall are difficult because you've got thirty young people all trying to cook over one pot whereas everybody could get their cameras and put them next to their own cookers and everybody could cook haggis, or chop some potatoes.</p> <p>The funny thing was every year, and I think the Scouts did it to wind me up, we always did a forum where we ask the Scouts what they wanted to do and without fail every single time they opened that up they said we want to do in one of the challenge badges, there's a wash a window, and I think pretty much every single one of them saw windows on our Scout hall and thought we're going to climb ladders and wash windows, so as soon as we got to doing it I said 'right everybody keeps asking to wash windows go and grab a cloth and find a window in your house and everybody got to wash a window. I thought, tick, finally they've asked all these questions to this this and I'm finally able to deliver it."</p>	09.24-11.17
11.18	<i>What do you think is the most popular activity for the Scouts?</i>	
	"Without a doubt, every time we ask the Scouts what they want to do, it's always dodgeball or helicopter."	11.22-11.38
11.40	<i>What do you think the least popular activity is?</i>	
	"Probably because I use it as a bit of a downtime, the minute game and because I keep threatening to have cabbages if the behaviour gets too bad, but I don't think people fancy that one."	11.44-12.06
12.07	<i>What is your worst memory within the Scouts?</i>	
	<p>"There was a Scout camp we were actually on and I think the weather was meant to be okay when we were planning it and everything, but an hour before the camp started till well after the camp finished it just absolutely poured with rain, chucking it down, and all of our activities were all outside and I think the worst memory I have was probably about half way through the second day, one of the Scouts came up absolutely shivering, nearly beside himself, he hadn't had a jacket and he was absolutely drenched and he was nearly hypothermic, so really panicking to try and figure out a way to warm him up and to get him to be okay.</p> <p>I was actually really worried for him. I don't know how we hadn't noticed that he'd been running around without a jacket. I think we were saying go</p>	12.09-14,19

	and get your jacket and he'd run off. We were really worried about him. I think that's probably the worst memory. At the Loch Goilhead camps that I talked about earlier, I got a message through on the walkie-talkie that one of our Leaders on the burn run had slipped and broken her shoulder, and Loch Goilhead is in the middle of nowhere. The nearest hospital was about four and a half hours' drive away, but the paperwork after that was horrendous, honestly, it was about six weeks of phoning people, trying to chase people up for bits of paper and trying to get insurance covered. It made a really long camp for me."	
14.20	What was your best memory?	
	"I don't know, I've got so many good memories. I guess there's always a proud memory when you give out a Chief Scout to your son; both my sons achieved Chief Scouts. Jacob's about to move on from Scouts, and he's earned Chief Scout Gold, so I'm very proud of that."	14.21-14.54
14.55	What are your hopes for the future of the Scouts?	
	"I hope it continues, to keep going the way it's going. This is a fantastic group and keeps growing and growing, and just added Squirrels, so more kids are able to join in Scouting and hope they'll love it all the way through to Scouts here and then to Explorers. I'd like to see maybe the Scout hall getting a bit bigger so we can have more Scouts in here. We're a wee bit at capacity here, and we've got a big waiting list. I'd love to see that disappear so everybody can get a spot. I know that some of the archives say the Scout troop here used to be at sixty or seventy Scouts. I don't know how we'd manage that in this hall."	14.59-15.52
15.53	Is there anything else you'd like to add?	
	"I've been a Scout Leader here for nearly ten years, and I've really enjoyed it, and I would highly recommend it to anybody else who wanted to become a Scout Leader."	15.54-16.12
16.13	Thank you very much for sharing your memories with me	
	You're welcome.	16.14
  		