

Project: Scouting through the Decades: A Century of Adventure Respondent: Paul Furbank Year of Birth: 1955 Age: 70 Connection to the project: Committee Member 1990/2000s Date of Interview: 10 April 2025 Interviewer: Gillian Alexander Recording Agreement: yes Information & Consent: yes Photographic Images: yes Length of Interview: 35.37 Location of Interview: Davidson's Mains Scout Hall Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)		
Summary Time (from: mins/secs)	Time Coded Summary/ Transcript	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
0.00 – 1.21	<p>The Interviewer welcomed the Respondent to the project and began by asking about his background. He explained that he was born in North London in 1955 but grew up in Kent, leaving in 1973 to pursue his studies. He later lived in Aberdeen, before moving to Edinburgh in the early 90s with his young family. He was then asked about his involvement with the 30th Craigmmond Scout Group and what had prompted that connection.</p>	
	<p>"I joined the Committee, went along to my first meeting, having had an invitation from the chair, Jim Martin, and when I got there, discovered that the Treasurer was leaving and Jim was twisting my arm to become Treasurer, the way of things in Scouting. So, I became Treasurer. I can't remember when early 1990s. I think Jonny, my eldest, was in Cubs at that time, so it would have been '93 something '94 maybe? and I was Treasurer until 2003/4, something like that, and then did a bit stayed on and did the Scout Post a bit after that."</p>	1.21 – 2.12
2.13 – 5.30	<p>The Respondent was asked whether he had any prior experience with the Scouting movement. He replied that he had, having joined Scouts in Kent at the age of 11. He progressed through Venture Scouts and later became a Young Leader, a role he continued on and off throughout his university years until around the age of 22. When asked whether that involvement came from the value he found in Scouting, he described the experience as "<i>fabulous</i>" and a huge part of his upbringing. What he particularly enjoyed, he explained, was that his Scout Group was separate from his school peers, giving him the chance to mix with like-minded young people who shared his enthusiasm for camping, games, earning badges, and the outdoors. At 16, he became a Venture Scout and took part in trips abroad. After this, he completed his basic training and became a Young Leader. He felt this background played a role in his own children joining Scouts at a young age and remaining in the Troop until their mid-teens. When asked if he would have encouraged a daughter to join Scouts, he admitted he wasn't sure, as it was uncommon for girls to take part in Scouting at the time. The conversation then turned to the state of the Group in terms of membership numbers and the need for leaders during that period.</p>	

	<p>“Always a need. The Cubs was run by Gordon Drysdale, who was fantastic. The Beavers, I think, was run by a number of mums - I think Gordon's wife was one, Jenny Martin, Jim's wife, was another, Aileen Hodgson, and there was someone else. We didn't know their names. We knew them as Mrs Hedgehog and Mrs Whatever cause the boys came back and said, ‘Hedgehog said this’ or ‘Fox said this’. But there was always difficulty finding leaders. The Scouts, I think, at the time was run by two young men, Ewen Baton and Shane McKenna, my son would know more about them, but they were only in their 20s. I think Shane was a policeman and I think fairly shortly afterwards Ian Dewar joined us as GSL and Scout Leader but there was always a need for more people right throughout the time I was involved there was always a need for who's going to be the next because understandably, I think a lot of the parents stayed until their kids left, and then you were looking for the successors.”</p>	5.31 – 7.02
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7.05 – 7.09	<p>The conversation moved on to ask the Respondent what his role as Treasurer on the Committee entailed.</p>	
	<p>“Yeah, looking after the money, basically. I was trying to think what it was like when I joined, and it seemed a bit haphazard. The hall wasn't in a good state, collecting money from subscriptions was erratic, I think is probably the fairest way of talking about it.</p> <p>Fundraisers were fairly limited - coffee mornings and jumble sales didn't raise an awful lot, and it was getting to the stage where I felt the group wasn't raising enough money to cover its overheads. So, we bit the bullet, and if you have the Committee notes, I'm sure there will be a lot of discussion on it...we bit the bullet and changed the way the subscriptions were charged and organised. It used to be done that kids came along every week and paid a sub; we changed it to three terms. You paid at the start of the term. So, we did that, but it was still kind of on the edge, and the hall needed work done to it – it was in a sorry state.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Was there much resistance to that change of subscriptions?</p> <p><b>Respondent:</b> No, I don't recall it. I mean, there was a lot of discussion, because we made sure that anyone made the case that they couldn't afford it - then fine, we'd be receptive, and they'd be an arrangement or discount or whatever – there was some way that it wasn't going to exclude people, but it just made it a little more organised. Fundraising carried on, the Gala, you know, the Scouts were always at the Gala raising a bit of money. You'd have coffee mornings, jumble sales things like that, but it wasn't big money, and they didn't make anything out of the hall.”</p>	7.10 – 9.23

9.24 – 11.11	<p>He was then asked whether the change to subscriptions had made a significant difference to the Group’s finances and what else needed to be done to improve the state of the 30th. He explained that the introduction of subscriptions certainly helped, giving the Group a more stable footing and making it easier to claim Gift Aid, along with other measures put in place by Tom Woof, whom he described as a “30th legend.” However, he noted that there was still much work to be done. He was then asked how he approached tackling those challenges, to which he explained that this was done through more fundraisers and social activities. He went on to talk about one of these in particular – this being Scout Post.</p>	
	<p>“I don’t know how it started. When I came along, it had been going for a number of years, organised by Edinburgh Area, within the Edinburgh Council boundary - Edinburgh Area Scout Association organised it, so they had the oversight, and each group within the city arranged to collect cards from their local area.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> And this was optional; a group opted in to take part in this scheme?</p> <p><b>Respondent:</b> Probably, but I think you'd have probably been a bit of a pariah if you didn't, because when you were collecting cards for the whole of Edinburgh, and they had a sorting office at Valleyfield St headquarters - so the cards will be taken there, you would get your areas' cards back, and you had to deliver them. So, for a group to opt out would be...</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Increasing the workload?</p> <p><b>Respondent:</b> Yeah, you'd have to cover for. Yeah. And that's actually what eventually did for it, because there were so many new developments, like down at New Haven, where you simply could not find people to deliver, so early 2000s, there was a decision made to stop it because it was becoming undeliverable, I suppose. And it was a real shame because it was a public service as much as a fundraiser. We used to set up outside Tesco, Safeway’s, I think it was, so our collections were there two or three nights a week and over a weekend.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> And this would begin in December?</p> <p><b>Respondent:</b> Yeah, it would be the first week in December that you would be collecting the cards, so on a Wednesday, Thursday, Friday night, Saturdays and Sundays you would have your collections. And I remember getting down there and setting up a table outside Tesco, and there were people, you know, on the first night, and there were people already waiting with their cards. So, it was a, it was a huge organisation from Edinburgh Area, run through the local groups and within this Group at the time, The Committee, if my memory serves, the Committee organised the collections, so we did the stuff outside Tesco with people bringing their cards, paying us, and then we took them to the sorting office and sorted them out - mainly Tom Woof, I have to say. So that was then, but then the cards that came back were delivered by</p>	11.12 – 14.43

	<p>the Ventures, and we covered the whole of Barton, Barton Park, Silverknowes, Corbiehill.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Was that something they would volunteer to be part of?</p> <p><b>Respondent:</b> I think they had originally volunteered it, but I remember thinking very quickly, because I didn't know anything about that when I first did it. I didn't know what they did- I didn't know that they got all these cards back and delivered, but there were so few of them, few of the Ventures, and it was a really hard task for them. But they kept the money for that – the Group kept money from the collections.”</p>	
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14.43 -16.52	He then went into more detail about how Scout Post worked.	
	<p>You would sell a stamp, of which, say, it was 15 p at the time - it was always slightly lower than second class stamp, second class post, so if you say sold stamp for 15p - 7p would be for the collection group, 2p would be for Edinburgh Area and 6p would be for the delivery group - that kind of split. So, the Ventures were keeping money, but my goodness, they had to work hard to earn it, and there were times when they ran out of time before Christmas. Yeah, and we decided to take that back from the Ventures, and I think they were happy with it. The Group helped fund them anyway, so if they needed money, they would come to the Group. So, we then took on the whole thing and made more of a, I'm reluctant to say business, but I think we organised it better over a period of time, it developed over two or three years. We got every Group family to leaflet, and we got people – businesses - to pay us to leaflet, so we'd have Scout Post leaflets and folded up in there you'd have the Corby or whatever, so we were earning money from that, and that gets through every door. So, every family had 30 or 40 houses that they would have to leaflet, and then they would deliver the cards to that area when they came back. And we actually grew the collections and deliveries quite considerably over that period, and grew the income quite considerably over that period. But it became a big mess, I think, when it stopped.</p>	14.43 -16.52
16.53 – 21.29	<p>The Respondent explained that although it was a lot of work, he thoroughly enjoyed being involved. After stepping down as Treasurer, he continued working on the Scout Post for another two or three years. His role began each October and ran until 24th December. He organised families within the Group, assigning them areas to leaflet, distributed the leaflets, and then coordinated the collections. Despite the workload, he found the experience very rewarding. He noted that the young people also enjoyed taking part and embraced the scheme enthusiastically. Parents were generally supportive, with only a few raising complaints. Overall, the Group welcomed the initiative, which proved highly successful—raising significant funds, strengthening the Group’s finances, and increasing its visibility in the local community. He expressed great admiration for those who managed the scheme across the wider Edinburgh area, recognising what a mammoth task it must have been. While it operated, he said, it was also a valued public service and when the Scout Post ended, he felt it was the right time to step back from volunteering with the Group. The conversation then</p>	

	<p>returned to his time on the Committee and the challenges they faced with the state of the hall, which by then was more than twenty years old.</p>	
	<p>“To get it into a state which was first of all, usable for a late 20th century youth organisation and secondly, to get it to a stage where it could possibly compete with the other halls in the area for lets, which would be a source of income.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> So, the hall, at the point you came in, was it being let out to other community groups?</p> <p><b>Respondent:</b> No, I think the only, the only people we had in was a dog trainer, which didn't go down well with some of the parents, but that was the only person who used it, and you couldn't get people in because it was in such a poor state. You've now got a decent rubber floor, the walls are lined, I don't think the walls were lined as part of the project we did - that must be later on. This was a store; I think an office [points at area around him, which was the room off the front of the hall] and the kitchen and toilets were unsatisfactory – So, it really needed brought into the late 20th century.”</p>	<p>21.29 – 22.39</p>
<p>22.40 – 25.53</p>	<p>The Interviewer asked how the Group had managed to progress such a significant renovation of the hall. The Respondent explained that this was made possible through National Lottery funding, which he had helped to secure, drawing on advice from individuals who had previously been involved in similar funding applications. He could not recall whether a feasibility study had been undertaken or whether the process moved directly to an application to the National Lottery, but believed this took place in the early 2000s. The Group was ultimately successful in securing the funding, although he could not remember the exact amount awarded.</p> <p>He stated that the refurbished hall was officially reopened by Tom Woof in 2003. He was then asked where the Scouts, Cubs, and Beavers held their weekly meetings during the renovation period, but he could not recall this. He suggested that it was likely to have been the Parish Church Hall and Holy Cross Church, noting that Tom Woof managed the hall there and that it was also used for sorting Scout Post cards.</p> <p>The conversation then moved on to the day of the hall's reopening and what he recalled of the event, although he said that he could not remember it at all. He was subsequently asked whether it was around this time that he stepped down from the Committee, and what factors led to that decision.</p>	
	<p>“Yeah. I think it, I think it was a combination of things – the kids were getting older, and I think I was still involved with Scouts after they left, I was busier at work - so didn't have enough time. I think it had been 10 years as Treasurer and so I think, you'd need to check the minutes...Committee minutes to find out, but it was something like that, so thought it's like someone else's term. But I carried on with the Scout Post because I enjoyed it.”</p>	<p>25.54 – 26.28</p>

26.29 – 33.10	<p>The Respondent was then asked whether, aside from finances and the hall renovation, the Committee had faced any other major challenges at the time. He replied that there hadn't been many. Once the hall was improved, outside lets began to come in, the first being Judo [Destination Judo]. He thought this may have been because martial arts groups were not permitted to use church halls, making the Scout Hall a valuable option, and noted, this hall let continues to this day.</p> <p>When asked about involvement with the Gala, he explained that the Committee role had only been peripheral, as the different sections of the Group usually organised themselves. He recalled that after stepping back as Treasurer, Andrew MacDonald had stepped into the position. He however remained active with the Scout Post until around 2007. The Respondent was then asked whether he had formed friendships through his time in the Group, to which he replied that he certainly had. The conversation then turned to the Group's visibility within the community. He admitted his view was somewhat biased due to his involvement, but felt the Group no longer had the same presence in the community as it once did, likely due in part to the end of the Scout Post. He also wondered whether the reduced visibility was linked to the fact that the Group had always been independent, rather than associated with a church. He recalled Committee discussions about this in the 1990s: some members felt the Group might attract more numbers and leaders if it became linked with the Parish Church, while others—including himself—preferred for it to remain independent and stand on its own. Ultimately, independence was the path chosen. He was then asked for his thoughts on the current Scouting movement.</p>	
	<p>"The introduction of girls - not before time. Squirrels - astonished that you get 4- to 6-year-olds going in as I remember what it was like when my kids were in Beavers! Pandemonium [laughs] Fantastic! I don't know what it's like in the older end."</p>	33.12 – 33.34
33.34 – 34.39	<p>The conversation then continues about the Explorer unit, and they discuss how it is no longer part of the Group but a District Explorer unit, which is linked to the 30<sup>th</sup> and is thriving. He was then asked if Scouting made an impact on his own life, to which he thought it definitely did. He was then asked is he thought this was still true for Scouts today.</p>	
	<p>"I can't see how it can't be, I really can't. I can't think why anyone who would be involved in it wouldn't come out better for it."</p>	34.39 – 34.57
34.58 – 35.07	<p>The Respondent was asked if he had any final thoughts or memories that he would like to share.</p>	
	<p>"Glad I've done it. There's a lot of good people involved – I've a huge admiration for the people who became leaders because I would never have done it. Good luck! I look forward to hearing the outcomes."</p>	35.07 – 34.28
34.28 – 35.37	<p>The Respondent was then thanked for his time and for contributing to the Project.</p>	