

12th Portobello (RHS) Scout Group – 1930's commentary

This account is based entirely on entries in Schola Regia issues, that being the sole available source.

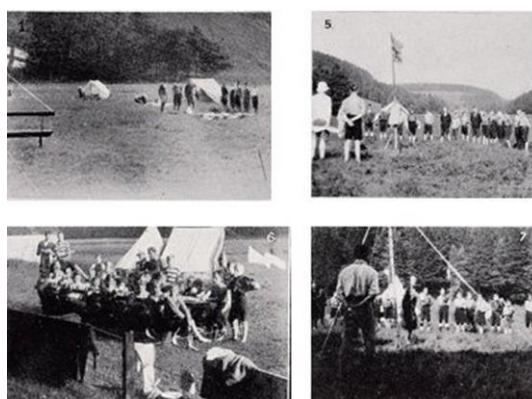
The first mention of Baden Powell's 1907 heritage is in the Easter 1931 Schola Regia, where 'Wolf Cubs at Jock's Lodge' are announced. Miss Brown is to be in charge, with Misses Hamilton and Henderson as her assistants. The end of the decade saw a cessation of activities until the following year.

'Miss Brown' was of course Rector's Secretary from 1924 to 1933, Jessie P Brown, who was leaving to get married, becoming Jessie P Young. She returned to school as a Junior teacher in 1943, serving until her retirement in 1968. Many scouts were of course taught by 'Jessie P'.

Miss Agnes Hamilton was one of the assistants, and became perhaps the most recognisable figure in the group, formally retiring in 1965, but in offering her services as required for some years thereafter.

The Schola Regia of Summer 1931 provided an article by Herbert J Bell in which he described the activities of a fledgling group which was to become the Scouts in October 1932. He talks about the group practising scoutcraft in Corstorphine woods, and at some point capturing a burglar and his swag on Queensferry Road. He doesn't mention if any form of badge is associated with this enterprise.

The Christmas Schola Regia of 1931 announced that over 50 cubs had been enrolled, and that the pack's name was to be the '12th Portobello (Royal High School)'. The names of the six sixers, and six seconds were also released. The same edition also recorded that six scout patrols had been formed, with the names Christie, Gibb, Ross, Catford, Borthwick and Bell (without explaining their origin). It also announced that at the first of two Christmas parties, boys described as 'less lucky than ours' from the Pleasance and Prestonfield were invited; parents were the guests at the second one.



The Easter 1932 edition showed several photographs (seen on the right) taken at the Scout Camp at Carcant (described as a 'camper's paradise' which also hosted the camp in 1933), Heriot (near Borthwick Hall), while the 1932 Christmas SR Wolf Cubs report

mentions six new sixers and seconds (all named). The 1933 Easter Cubs article talks at length about their hosting 30 cubs from the University Settlement pack, which one suspects fell into the same category as the Prestonfield pack. Impressive that even after just a couple of years the Cubs were helping other less fortunate individuals. The District Shield was mentioned for the first time in the 1933 Summer edition, when it emerges that the Troop won it for the second successive time. That edition also mentions Miss Brown leaving (to get married), and a new Group Scoutmaster (GSM) being appointed. He is named as Mr Law, who it appears an English master in the senior school.

The 1934 Scout's spring term featured lectures, a beano (apparently a feast), a visit to the Calton Hill Observatory, and a PL's visit to the 24th Waverley troop. Mr Bell sadly had to leave to progress his studies. The Cubs meantime had a party to which the Prestonfield pack was once again invited, and Miss Barnett was recruited to help out.

The Summer term saw Scout's preparation for the annual camp, with Pentlands and Easter Newton trips. The camp was held at Forgandenny, Perthshire in the first 11 days of August, with the Scoutmaster offering assurances that the site was as good as their beloved Carcant. The Cubs meantime took second place (of thirteen packs) at the district sports. 1935 commenced with the Scouts 'A' troop beating the 'B' troop by 29 points to 3 at rugby (not very gallant), while new organisation structure saw every second meeting run by two PL's. The Cubs meantime had entertained boys from the West Port pack at their party, and older cubs took party in the sing-along at the Assembly Hall. Mrs Young presented a framed photo of the Chief Scout (Robert Baden-Powell), on the 4th anniversary of the pack's founding. No entries for 1936, but in 1937 there was a rally at Murrayfield, in the presence of the King and Queen, also a Jamboree in Holland. and preparations for the Annual Camp at Dunkeld. On May 9th, the Cubs had a joint Coronation service with the 4th and 13th Portobello packs (the Coronation of George VI and Elizabeth was on May 12th).

4th June 1938 saw the Cubs attending the National Rally at Ibrox park in Glasgow. They also visited the Empire Exhibition in Bellahouston Park on the same trip, and saw high towers, Canadian 'Mounties' and the 'Crazy House'. The Scouts meantime were third in the District Shield, one scout attended a Jamboree in Latvia, and a Senior patrol was formed. A crew of Rover Scouts was formed, meeting in clubrooms at 26 Frederick Street.

The Christmas 1939 edition of Schola Regia brought the sad but inevitable news that all scouting activities would cease, "...the regulations concerning juvenile organisations forbidding the use of the school gym", and Jock's Lodge being commandeered by the A.R.P. To bring things to a final conclusion, Assistant Scoutmasters Gibb and Drever have enlisted in HM Forces. The report concluded with the hopeful conclusion that meetings would continue next year!