

12th Portobello – alternate meeting places

While winter evenings were spent indoors at the main scouting venues which were school halls and the Tower Street Memorial Hall, all our efforts were directed to getting outdoors from March onwards to visit the great variety of places which successive scout leaders had developed for our pleasure.

The Campsites – [link to the website article](#)

From 1931 onwards, it was clear that certain areas of Scotland were attractive destinations for campsites, the emergence of sailing and canoeing meant that from around 1960 it was essential that the campsite bordered water, preferably a substantial loch.

The Lammermuirs and Moorfoots, Tweedsmuir cottage

Many fine (but often bitterly cold) hikes were undertaken in the relatively vast area of these fine hills which form the age-old barrier between Edinburgh and the Tweed valley. These hills provided challenging map-reading and compass skills (and more than a bit of luck), as frequent valleys and featureless hilltops provided a real orienteering challenge. A frequent destination was Tweedsmuir cottage on the A701 Moffat Road. The cottage, sadly now demolished (according to Michael Halcrow) was the lower Eastmost corner of a 15 kilometre square of difficult terrain, bounded on the other three corners by Broughton, Symington and Abbington. It often seemed that successive scout leaders sought to provide successively difficult challenges with starting points around the 15 km square.

Bonaly

Is now defined as a South East Scotland' Scout Centre for 'Action and Adventure'. This 24-acre site was a fairly frequent destination for the Twelfth in the 1950's and early 1960's, before we started developing our canoe passion. Bonaly offered a cheap excursion to the edge of the Pentland Hills, and was where some basic scouting skills were learned, prior to trying to put them into practice at the Annual camps

Drummonds Hall, Lauder

'Lauder Cottage' as it was reverently known formed an important part of the scouting scene for a dozen years until we sadly we had to vacate it in 1974.

Hadden cottages, Kelso

The 1977 'Twelfth' magazine advised "The cottage at Kelso nears completion – convenor is Graham Henderson"

Ae Valley (Cubs)

Gordon Symon started the Ae valley visits, following information received from a Penpont shop staff member in 1971. Many photographs show its obvious popularity.

Operation Albatross venues

Assorted venues (mainly in East Lothian) hosted usually overnight expeditions which tested the scouting skills of Senior scouts. Alan Buchan's 1976 timetable shows setup on Sat March 13th, with the main event on Sunday 14th

Fisherrow harbour (Sea Scouts boats), also Fisherrow Yacht Club

While the scouts practised their eskimo rolls and canoe surfing in the sea just over the promenade from Tower Street, the Sea Scouts required a more stable base for Twelfth Knight, the boat they built themselves between 1961 and 1962. It was an R.N.S.A. (Royal Navy Sailing Auxiliary) dinghy - a 14 ft long Clinker-built dinghy widely used for naval cadet training. Rob Lawrie describes its construction in his reminiscence.

The Caprice restaurant, Musselburgh

Friday nights around 10pm saw a group of around half a dozen Scouters (current and ex) sampling the pleasures of Escalope Italienne and Semifreddo Arlechino (and the odd glass of rich red). Alan Buchan's Venture Scout diary of 1975/76 advised: "*Caprice. We usually arrive 10pm Friday nights. Those wanting transport from the Portobello/Arthur Seat area should contact AB before 8.30pm. Please come armed with a £1 note (£7 in 2023). Those under 18 are respectfully requested to drink orange juice or sit at a separate table*". The last sentence attracted a written comment "which idiot wrote this?".

Jolly's restaurant

When the Caprice closed (when?), some of the staff moved to Jolly's in Elm row, where former Group members have been going for the last 20+ years.

A selection of Alternate meeting Places



Bonaly campsite – courtesy of SE Scotland org. Google maps



1969 March - Seagull camp at Lauder



1979 Cub camp at Hadden Cottages Kelso



1968 Dabshead Summit Lammermuirs (the 'arms' reportedly belong to AA)



Caprice Restaurant, Musselburgh. Famous for Escalope Italienne and Semifreddo Arlechino



1975 August - Venture Scout challenge hike – Alan Buchan on trig. point



1968 Operation Albatross Saltoun - Halcrow Turnbull Liston AA Ball



1975 Cubs Ae Valley camp



Fisherrow Harbour – home to Twelfth Knight (2012 image courtesy Joe Fox)