

## **Memories of 1<sup>st</sup> Sedgley Scout Group John Lloyd (Born 1920)**

As this year, 2010, marks the centenary of the 1<sup>st</sup> Sedgley Boy Scouts, it is fitting, perhaps, to look into history and relive a few memories. Unlike those who can remember events and even conversations verbatim, many years afterwards, I can only recall a few events and names.

The Sedgley troop came into existence before the start of World War One, when some of the Scouts were enlisted in the armed forces. A commemorative wall plaque in the Parish Hall paid tribute to the Scouts who served between 1914 – 1918. The Parish Hall was the Scout headquarters and later in the 1930's, was also the boys Sunday school, which I attended. The Hall is not used today as I understand, but was still used as the Scout H.Q. when the troop reformed. I joined in the 1930's when the Scout Master was Joe Evans – later Rupert Turner, who was then Sunday School Superintendent, followed by the Curate, Rev Lumley. There was no joining fee or payment, as I recall, apart from the cost of uniform. What a thrill to be dressed as a Boy Scout!

Meetings were held on one night a week when we assembled in groups or 'Patrols', to learn the many facets of scouting. How to tie knots, semaphore signaling etc, and were given badges to show competence. Sometimes an ex-army drill sergeant (Mr Webb?) came along to teach us how to 'form fours'.

Special mention should be recorded of the blind pianist (name now forgotten) who cheerfully taught us many scout songs, some of which I can remember still.

Weekend camps around Trysul area were a regular feature, the camping highlight being the Jamboree held in Patsull Park circa 1935. That occasion and the camp fire evenings are truly unforgettable.

Camping gear, bell tents etc, along with the band instruments, were housed under the stage in the Parish Hall, and were presumably all a legacy of the original troop. All instruments were in good order when the band reformed under the guidance of Don Spinks, himself an accomplished bugler. I was chosen to be one of the side drummers. Practice was on a separate week night, the hall resounding to the rattle of drumsticks! The band had frequent engagements in leading scout-marches and church parades around Sedgley. On one occasion when marching down Bush Bank, the noise of the drums startled a passing horse, which reared up threatening to dismount the rider. Our big drum player Billy Hartill (of Sedgley Butcher fame), dropped his drum and ran across to restrain the horse. A gallant action.

Two other events around that time stand out in my mind. One was when the band took part in a torch light procession in Wolverhampton, - this was at the time of the Oswald Mosley Blackshirts – I'm not quite sure of the significance and the other was a fire on Sedgley Beacon. A chain of fires was to be lit across the country to mark the Kings Jubilee of 1935. The Sedgley scouts were entrusted to build the wooden pyramid for lighting at the appropriate time. Unfortunately it was set alight, presumably by others, a day or two too soon, so that pyramid had

to be hastily rebuilt for the official lighting. Unknown to me then, a photograph of the re-building was captured on camera by an amateur photographer, Mr Fred Cooper of Penn. The picture only came to light many years afterwards when Mr Cooper became my Father in law!!

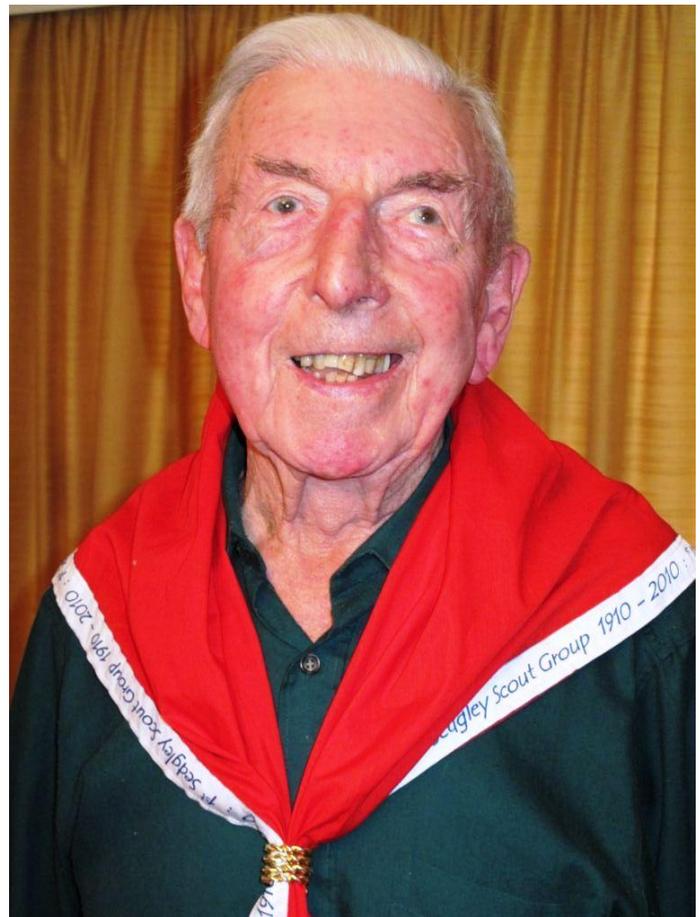
The pressures of life at that time just prior to the outbreak of WW2 changed the pattern of life and presumably scouting in Sedgley, so it is heartwarming to know that the Sedgley Scouts are again flourishing under capable leadership at this centenary year, 2010.

Good luck to all.

J. Lloyd



**1<sup>st</sup> Sedgley Scouts were entrusted to build the wooden pyramid on Sedgley beacon for lighting on Kings Jubilee of 1935**



**John. Lloyd**