

2nd Ringwood Scout Group Early History

By Jack Clark

In the middle of 1953, I approached Father O'Toole, Parish Priest of Our Lady's Church to offer my services in establishing a Scout in the Parish. My first association in Scouting started in 1926, when I met Charlie Henry, a Scotsman newly arrived in Australia from 3rd Dundee, Scotland. He formed 1st Mt Dandenong with himself as Scout Master and myself as his Assistant. He encouraged me to go through all my training and entered me for the Wood Badge Course at Gilwell Park in 1927.

On the 13th September, 1953, having previously contacted the officials of 1st Ringwood Scout Group including Mr Cory Oke (District Commissioner), I called a meeting. Five boys turned up and the first Troop meeting was held on my property at Loughmans Hill, North Ringwood. Taking a Scarf I had worn at 1st Mt Dandenong, I pointed out that these colours (green and dark blue) were very Scout colours much better for camouflage than gaudy one and they accepted them as theirs. They had a historic link through 1st Mt Dandenong with the ancient Scottish Group. One month later the Scarves were presented by Mr King, who was one of the boys who camped at Brownsea Island in England under Baden-Powell in 1908. The first to be presented was Dick Lye followed by John and Peter Hamilton, Kevin and Graham Lindsay, Peter Burns and Greg Naylor. Mary Whittam, who was working as a Lady Cub Master in Camberwell formed the Cub Pack and presented the Scout Hats.

Meetings were held on Friday nights in the School Room, which was the little timber church. A few years later, 3rd Ringwood's hall in Patterson Street, East Ringwood was purchased for £3000.00. It was extensively refurbished until it was destroyed by fire in 1979. After the fire, the Scout Troop met in the Red Cross Hall opposite 3rd Ringwood's present Hall. The Cub Pack met at 6th Ringwood off Wonga Road, North Ringwood and Venturers at different locations around Ringwood.

The present Hall was unoccupied, so the Cub Pack moved in straight away. The Group presented a submission of lease tender to the Ringwood City Council in March 1981. It was written by Mr David Alford. Three other organisations submitted tenders. The Council decided tenders with affiliations to youth within the municipality of Ringwood would be acceptable applicants. We alone did not have a permanent home in which to operate and this was hoped to be sufficient to enable us to be a successful applicant. The only certainty was five of the six Councilors had affiliations with Scouting. The outcome, however, was not a foregone conclusion. However we were successful with the tender and two years later commenced the upgrade of the premises.

An amount of \$9,750.00 was spent upgrading the building and later the second hall, toilets and kitchen were built, followed a year later by the meeting room and storeroom. The entire building project was co-ordinated by Mr Ian Greer, a Builder and Parents Committee person. We received a one-third grant from Ringwood City Council, which together with the \$23,000.00 we received as a payout from the East Ringwood Hall, helped to complete the building extensions to the present Hall. Apart from the brickwork, electrical, plumbing and plastering, all the remaining work was

completed by parents working each Saturday on a roster basis. The lease cost \$10.00 per year for 15 years. Our thanks go to the then District Commissioner Mr David Graham for without his contacts, the project would not have reached fruition.

Since those years, many Cubs, Scouts, Leaders and Parents have been associated with the Group. Our first association with the Scout Cohen Shield resulted in a Silver and Competitor Pennants. The results of the following years are displayed on the Pennant Boards.

On the 13th September 2000, at our 47th birthday, the Scout Group's name was changed to 2nd Maroondah. This has been a revelation resulting in many new members and the stigma of being located in the Heathmont area a bonus.