

# THE HISTORY OF 2ND RINGWOOD SCOUT GROUP

An extract from 'Wonga' Jack Clarke's Diary.

The 2nd Ringwood Scout Group officially commenced on Saturday 13th September with five boys. Michael and Anthony Chievers, Graham and Kevin Tetley, Gregory Naylor. The Chiever brothers dropped out because Scouting clashed with other affairs, but others joined Adrian Lindsay, Pat Lynch, Peter Burns, Arthur Orr, John and Peter Hamilton.

I met Mary Whitten, a Cub Master in Camberwell, who agreed to form the Cub Pack.

Registration time was approaching. I called a Troop Council and explained to them my background.

In 1926 I met Charlie Henry, a young Scotsman newly arrived in Australia who had gone through all Sections of 3rd Dundee in Scotland. It was a Group which had actual contact with Baden Powell the founder of Scouting.

He and I decided to form a Group, the 1st Mt Dandenong. He was the Scout Master and I was his Assistant Scout Master. I commenced my Wood Badge in 1927 at Gilwell Park.

Many years later at a conference of St Vincent De Paul Society I read about an appeal to expand sponsored Scout Groups. So I offered my help. I contacted 1st Ringwood Group (Corry Oke - Bob Okes father) to seek advise, called a meeting and here we are.

The Scarf I am wearing is 1st Mt Dandenong, which is green and dark blue the same colours as worn by 3rd Dundee. They were very Scouty colours and much better for camouflage than the gaudy ones. I had forgotten that the black colour had faded. However the general meaning was the same. The boys agreed with my idea and voted to accept the colours as those of 2nd Ringwoods.

The day of the investitures was when the Group officially came into existance on 15th November 1953. The first Scout invested was Dick Lye followed by John and Peter Hamilton, Kevin and Graham Kelly, Adrian Lindsay, Peter Burns and Greg Naylor. The scarves were presented by Mr King, who was one of the boys camped on Brownsee Island in England under Baden Powell in 1908. Mary Whitten presented the hats. Also present was Bill Wilkins Group Scout Master and Spider White a Patrol Leader of 1st Ringwood.

The meetings were usually held on Sundays in the bush at the back of Loughmans Hill. Evening meetings were Friday nights in the School (The little old church between the present church and hall).

He mentions the problem of not owning suitable lock-up premises for storage of camping gear, displaying flags and the Papal Special Apostolic Blessing in a headquarters room. He writes - I had to bring ropes,

poles and other necessary things for each nights programme with me.

The highlight of the early years was the camp at Howqua River, Easter 1955. We travelled by truck. Few people had cars in those days. All the boys and the camping gear was piled into the truck, which was used extensively by the group. Leaving Ringwood at 9-00a.m, we reached Howqua River at 6-00p.m. I was assisted by Dan Kane who had tremendous organising ability without which the camp could have been a shambles. This was the first big camp for me and the boys. The truck was sold to the Group for one Pound.

In 1958, we made our first contact with Clifford Park, and camped ther over Easter which became our regular stamping ground. The Group built a lodge which was used as a chapel at the Rover Moot in 1961-62, and later was burnt in the bushfires.

The Group expanded, aquired Scouters - Angela Aders and Mrs Waywood for Cubs, Daryl Richardson, Will Aders and Peter Lye joined Scouts. Senior Scouts were started by John Whitten.

In February 1972, the Group purchased the old 3rd Ringwood Hall in Patterson Street East Ringwood for \$4,000-00. The Group flourished during this time, but in 1979 the Hall was burnt to the ground. Accommodation was found for one Cub Pack at 8th Ringwood and another at Scots Church Hall outside Eastland Shopping Centre. The Scouts were housed in the Community Hall East Ringwood and the Venturers at Our Lady's Hall.

In 1981 the present Hall became available, so we moved a Cub Pack into the Community Hall. With the help of David Graham the then District Commissioner and David Alfred a member of the District Association, a detailed submission was presented to Ringwood City Council for the lease of the Hall. The submission was successful costing \$10-00 per year for 10 years and the opportunity of a Headquarters was realised.

A building programme was undertaken in conjunction with Ringwood City Council and Heathmont Guides. The cost was in excess of \$40,000-00, comprising two Halls, Toilets, Kitchen, Meeting Room and Store Room.

All through these years the Group struggled with a maxamum of three Leaders or less in a Section, but over the last four years we have been fortunite to have four or more Leaders.

The present Group comprises Joey Scouts - 6 to 8 year olds, Cub Scouts 8 to 11 years and Scouts 11 to 15 years.