

History of The Basin

Chapter 14

Scouts & Guides

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Summary

This chapter details the history of the Scout and Guide groups in The Basin.

In 1957, the Ferntree Gully District Association sponsored a closed Scout Troop operating at the Salvation Army Home in The Basin. This group was called 2nd The Basin because scouting rules would not allow for a closed group to be designated "1st".

The appearance of uniformed scouts in The Basin evoked enough interest to form an "open" 1st The Basin Group. The first meeting was held in April 1958 at a garage on the property of Mr. and Mrs. Taudevin at 26 Augusta Road.

Over the years, accommodation included various garages until the Presbyterian Church building in Forest Road was purchased in 1964. When this burnt down in 1972, St. Mary's Church Hall, The Progress Hall and The Basin Special School Gym were all used at times. In 1988, after many years of searching and controversy, a new hall was opened on The Basin Triangle built almost entirely by voluntary labour.

The first Guide and Brownies groups in The Basin were formed at public meeting held in April, 1964. The first Guide company and Brownie pack began operation later that year.

The groups used the same accommodation as the Scout groups and when the new hall was opened in 1988, they also used the facility.

Scouts and Cubs

The story of 1st The Basin Scout troop would not be complete without mention of two earlier Scouting events connected with The Basin.

The first of these was the use of a property on the corner of Augusta Road and Stewart Street, in the 1930's, by scouts from the 6th Malvern troop, under the leadership of Ted Mortiboy. This property is now known as Mortiboy Reserve. It was purchased by the council from Ted Mortiboy in the middle 1970's. On the property is a circle of pine trees, each one having been planted as a seedling by a scout on being awarded his Patrol Leaders stripes. In later years the house on the property was loaned to 1st The Basin Scouters as a meeting place. This facility greatly assisted group planning and training in those early days.

The other event which played an important and more direct role in the formation of 1st The Basin was the sponsorship of a Scout Group, 2nd The Basin, at the Salvation Army's Bayswater Boys Home by the Ferntree Gully District Association in 1957. This group was called 2nd The Basin because scouting rules would not allow for a closed group to be designated "1st". The Salvation Army group was initially run by a number of Scouters from the Ferntree Gully District, until Councillor Guy Turner obtained the services of Des Smith, who became Scout Leader in charge of the group. Des Smith served in this capacity for some eighteen months.

The appearance of uniformed scouts in The Basin evoked interest from a number of parents who asked that their sons be allowed to join. This was not possible as 2nd The Basin was a closed group. However, interest grew and it was decided

at a public meeting to form an "open" 1st The Basin Group. Under the guidance of District Commissioner O. E. Gepp and District Scoutmaster Jim "Silver" Billingham, 1st The Basin was formed. Des Smith agreed to take the job of Group Scoutmaster until another Scouter could be found.

The first meeting of the Scouts and Cubs was held in April 1958 at a garage on the property of Mr. and Mrs. Taudevin at 26 Augusta Road. Scouts and Cubs met on the same day as this was the only time that the garage was available. The first cub pack met under the leadership of Marj Woollard who was the first Akela. Another Scouter was found for the Salvation Army Group and Des Smith transferred his warrant permanently to 1st The Basin. The Group was extremely fortunate in its early days to have the services of leaders of the calibre of Marj Woollard and Des Smith.

The garage in Augusta Road soon became too small as numbers grew and a new meeting place was found in a larger garage at the rear of Howe's Greengrocer shop in Forest Road. This shop later became the Forest Lodge Restaurant. This garage was available at any time so the Scouts and Cubs were able to meet on different days. Conditions were still fairly primitive but enthusiasm did not dim. A parents committee was formed and held regular meetings in the "Scout Hall". A number of fund raising activities were held, and although money was urgently required for equipment and a Scout Hall, the helping of others was not forgotten. A special activity raised a substantial sum of money to assist The Basin Fire Brigade purchase a new vehicle.

In 1960 David Rickard and Wayne Watson at-

Distinguished Resident

Bill Major

Since moving here in 1973, Bill Major has had involvement with nearly every community group in The Basin. President of The Basin Primary School Committee, Member of the Wicks Reserve Committee, President of the Doongalla Pony Club, Co-ordinator of The Basin Primary School Centenary Celebrations and Scout Group Leader are some of Bill's more formal involvements. In between these commitments he has made time for Basketball, St. Mary's Church, Brownies, Kindergarten and other interests outside The Basin. A versatile man indeed!

Bill has contributed enormously to The Basin community and has had the continual support of his family. They have watched him depart at night to attend unending meetings; weekends involved in maintenance projects and have opened their home for fund-raising social events on many occasions.

Bill will tell you that he is the winner from his community efforts; he has gained many friends that he knows will see him through the good and bad times; he has had a social and enjoyable life and every good turn he has done has been repaid many times over.

Scouts and Cubs

Story of the Fern Tree Gully District Badge

The District Badge that is worn by all Scouts and Cubs is a symbol not only of the fern glades that abound in our district, but of the Boy Scout Movement.

On close study, you will notice that the frond is not fully grown. Hence, anything that is not fully grown must have movement. As the brotherhood of Scouts is always growing, it must always be known as a movement.

It is essential that every solid construction must have a strong foundation; the fern stem proves itself here as it will not shed its leaves even in death. The leaves themselves also depict the older and younger members of our brotherhood. The lower leaves depict the Scouters who train the boys in the arts of scouting, the slight curl in this leaf denoting that a Scouter has a chance to grow (not upwardly or outwardly as some do) and that he can improve his knowledge by attending his training course. As we move up the stem we have Rovers seeking to further their knowledge on one side. We move further up and find the Senior Scouts are doing likewise on both sides. Then on to the Boy Scouts, to whom our founder Lord Baden Powell dedicated the movement.

At the top we have the bud, signifying the Wolf Cubs who are looking to all those before them for survival in this wonderful movement. The partly opened bud being the promise of the future; truly the Scouts of tomorrow.

tended the Pan Pacific Jamboree at Lansdowne in NSW.

Councillor Guy Turner was actively working in the Ferntree Gully Council to obtain a site for the erection of a hall. Two sites were under discussion, Wicks Memorial Reserve and land in Conyers Street at the rear of the Health Centre. Mr. "Wally" Beazley produced a design of a hexagonal shaped hall for consideration. It was decided to name the future hall "The Guy Turner Memorial Scout Hall", but when it was discovered that donations to the building fund were not claimable as a tax deduction, the name of the proposed building was changed to "Guy Turner (War Memorial) Scout Hall" as tax deductions were allowable for war memorial buildings.

Whilst still at Howe's garage, the first Summer camp was held at Butterfield Flat, near Monbulk, and David Rickard became the Groups first, First Class Scout and consequently the first Troop Leader. Another first was the winning of the Eden Park Challenge Trophy, a competition open to Tenderfoot and Second Class Scouts only.

The Group soon outgrew the garage and book-

ings were obtained at The Basin Progress Hall. Steady growth continued in all sections of the Group and fundraising became more adventurous. To mention a few - there was a supper dance, a Christmas bazaar and a mini gang show. Another event which originated at this time was the annual "Midnight Hike" from The Basin to the top of Mount Dandenong, via the SEC track. Few of the scouts from those early days will forget the adventurous "Wide Games" devised by Des Smith and played out on the moonlit paddocks of the Salvation Army.

The Group was offered, and purchased the Special State School gymnasium which stood in Liverpool Road with the idea of relocating it for use as a Scout Hall. The building proved impossible to move and the building was wrecked and all useable material sold for a good profit. A shield carved from the oak sideboard of early settler, J. J. Miller, was presented as a district trophy.

A Senior Troop was formed with several of the Seniors assisting as instructors in the Cub Pack and Scout Troop. The number of leaders had also increased with Des Smith as Group Scout Master, Marj Woollard as Lady Cub Master with assistants Mary McGillwray, Anne Revill, Audrey Foggart and Lynda Smith. The Scoutmaster was Ken Gould with assistants Vernon Roy, David Rickard and Eric Lock was Senior Scout Leader with assistants Tom Bedohazy and Terry Elliot. In 1963 the troop was renamed the 5th Knox.

A Scout Hall became number one priority when the Group was unable to obtain sufficient bookings at The Progress Hall to accommodate the expanding organisation. In 1964 the group, now numbering 42, purchased the Presbyterian Church building in Forest Road, and this became the 5th Knox Scout Hall. At the time, the Group also had a lease on some land at the rear of the The Basin Kindergarten, although this was relinquished in 1967.

In 1965 Ken Gould took over as Scoutmaster. Staunch committee members over these years included Mesdames Watson, Keable, Brown and Messrs. Wilder, Watson, Foley, Churchland and Keable.

Phil Molesworth took over as Scoutmaster in 1966 after Ken Gould left leaving Vernon Roy in charge. At the time, Phil lived in Thornbury and commuted to The Basin from there. Phil stayed

until September 1967 when he was conscripted. Phil was discharged in December 1967 and in January 1968 moved to The Basin. Imagine his surprise when the The Basin Scout Troop came to his home and asked him to return as they had no scout leader. Phil stayed until mid 1971 and was instrumental in assisting John Maas gain his Queen Scout, the first for The Basin Troop.

In 1971, a brick extension to the Hall was completed. Shortly after this in 1972 the Hall was burnt down under suspicious circumstances. A large amount of gear and records were also lost. Luckily, the hall was insured with the Scout Association although the group had difficulty obtaining money from the Association for the Hall insurance.

The loss of the Hall was a blow to the group and for a while fund raising was at an all time high. The community was sympathetic to the group and a large amount of money was raised. Thought was given to rebuilding the Hall on the same site but the site was not really a suitable place for a Scout Hall and the Council would not provide a permit to rebuild on the site. Without a permanent storage area gear was stored with various families. Section meetings were held at St. Mary's Hall for about one year and later at The Basin Special School Gym until the new hall was built.

In 1978 the troop name was changed back to 1st The Basin. This was in line with a new policy to name troops according to their district and gives more identity to the name.

In 1979 a Ladies Auxiliary was formed. In this year three members - Scott Brennan, Glenn Butcher and Ian Winkworth attended the 12th Aust. Jamboree. In 1982, Mark Ray, Simon Major and Stuart Laird attended the Jamboree at Collingwood Park, Ipswich. Queensland.

In 1983, 1st The Basin won every competition in the District and the 1st The Basin Venturer unit was formed. In 1985, Stuart Dorwood, Matthew Major, Matthew Kelly, Karl Meerten and Stuart Blegg attended the Jamboree at Cataract Park. NSW.

Some committee representatives over the years 1971-1985 include Goodman, Winkworth, Aroin, Hacking, Heard, Williams, Newman, Bell, Tomlinson, Wood, Brennan, Bloomer, Bettens, Major, Butcher, Short, Moorfoot, Spiteri, Coxhill, Hudson and Whalan.

Since the loss of the hall, the Troop had been searching for another site for a hall. Sites offered by the Council included The George Grumont Reserve (rejected by community) and Batterham and Wicks Reserves (rejected by the troop as unsuitable). In 1980, Knox Council offered land in The Triangle.

Over the next few years, many plans were considered for a new Hall. The Basin Progress Association was against having a Scout Hall on the Triangle as they claimed they had an agreement with The City of Knox that use of land on The Triangle be restricted to "passive park" although it seems that this "agreement" was not in writing. Thereafter ensued a public debate between the Scout Troop community and the Progress Association. At one stage the Scout Troop even had a publicity caravan in the Service Station in the main street. Eventually, Knox Council decreed that the site be used for a Scout Hall.

In 1984, a building committee was formed consisting of Irene Major, Ron Short, Gus Pearl, Alan McIntyre, Ian Dorwood and Paul Navarro. Irene Major took on the task of building co-ordinator. A permit was obtained and building commenced. The building was financed by the insurance from the old Hall, sale of land (old Hall site) and funds raised (approximately \$40,000 in total). Except for bricklaying, the hall was built entirely by voluntary labour with special assistance from Ian Dorwood.

In 1987 the Rotary Club of Boronia fitted the roof to the hall. Internal work was completed and a certificate of occupancy granted.

In 1988 the hall was finished and the hall was officially opened by members of the troop in front of an entourage of community members and local dignitaries. A 30th birthday party was held at the same time to commemorate 30 years of the group. The hall is now also used by The Guides and Brownies.

In 1988, Matthew Hellier, Luke Hellier, Jason Spiteri, Robert Elery, Ben McManus and Paul Lowe attended the Jamboree at Adelaide.

Group leaders since 1973 have been John Brennan, David Aroin, Stewart Tomlinson, Bill Spiteri, Bill Major and Phillip Ball. A cub leader of note is Dianne Aroin who served for 20 years retiring in 1995.

Queen Scouts over the years have been John Maas in 1968, Jamie Butcher in 1981, Glenn

Guides and Brownies

Leaders 1st The Basin Guides	
1964	Sue Anderson, Shirley Frost
1966	Shirley Frost, Ada Ellis, Camille Key, Jo Harper
1968	Shirley Frost, Val Close
1975	Wendy Frost
1976	Dorothy Kimber, Cath Newnham
1977	Sue Bosley, Dianne McCarthy
1981	Cath Warren, Kay Mann
1982 -1992	Eleanore Turner, Kay Mann, Beth Hartley, Dianne Rackman

District Commissioners	
1968	Mrs Pat White
1973	No DC
1975	Pat Dryden
1976	Nance Square (acting)
1977	Joan Huxtable (acting)
1979	Sheila Stancombe
1983	Lil Mosselman
1985	Val Salmon
1991	Audrey Knight (District Leader)

Butcher in 1984, David Killian in 1995, Rowan Evans in 2001, Paul Philips in 2001 and James Aroin in 2002 .

Guides and Brownies

The first Guide company functioning in The Basin appears to have been in the 1920's but there is no evidence that the company was officially registered.

Prior to 1964, Basin girls of Brownie or Guide age had a wait of up to two years to join the Borna pack or companies.

On July 28 1964, a public meeting was held to

Leaders 1st The Basin Brownies	
1964	Mrs R Brown, Brenda Jackson
1965 - 1973	Brenda Jackson
1974	Barbara Powesland, Mrs Killard
1975	Claire Harman, Bridget Harman
1977 - 1988	Anne Hutnyk, Marie Pearson, Jean Hill, Heather Anderson, Corrie Forster, Nellie Klep, Loris Short, Glenys McCarthy
1989	Audrey Knight, Judy Corram

Leaders 2nd The Basin Brownies	
1967	Mrs Butler, Julie Hand
1969	Joined with 1st pack
1979	Marrilyn Simenson, Alida Van Dongen, Sandra Lawrence
1980	Sandra Lawrence, Val Salmon
1982 - 1992	Val Salmon, Leonie Bettens, Ria Clevon, Eileen Cromarty, Gayle Shaw

Leaders 3rd The Basin Brownies	
1981	Lynda Hudson, Linda Goodwin
1983 - 1992	Heather Anderson, Chris hall, Trish Bishop, Sue Beney, Margaret Jones

propose forming a Guide association in The Basin. The response was overwhelming and an association was formed with Mrs. Cartmel President. Mrs. Pritchett Secretary and Mrs. Kirkham Treasurer. These then became the executive of the first Guides and Brownies based in The Basin.

The 1st Basin Brownies pack of eight girls commenced on 18 September 1964 under Mrs. R. C. Brown (Brown Owl) and Mrs. Brenda Jackson (Tawny Owl). The pack was registered on 12 March 1965. The girls in this first pack were Loraine Jackson, Alice Kingma, Lynette

Guides and Brownies

Whittleston, Barbara Cartmel, Vivian Kirkham, Wendy Frost, Elynda Watson and Mandy Noone (see photo on page).

Interest grew so quickly that a second pack was established the same year. This second pack continued until 1969 when it joined with first pack. A third pack was established in 1981.

The guide company of nine girls commenced on 23 October 1964 with leaders Sue Anderson

(Captain) and Mrs. Shirley Frost (Lieutenant). The girls in this first company were Anne-Marie Zaicz, Lenise Easley, Janice Gould, Robyn Ritchie, Ann Shanks, Leonie Noone, Margaret Smith, Carol De Haas and Gabrielle McDonald (see photo on page).

Both groups were based at the old Scout Hall in Old Forest Road until it burnt down in 1972. Meetings were then held at St. Mary's Church of



Back Row L-R Shirley Frost (Lieutenant), Sue Anderson (Captain)

Anne-Marie Zaics, Lenise Easley

Janice Gould, Robyn Ritchie, Ann Shanks, Leonie Noone, Margaret Smith

Front Row Carol de Hass, Gabrielle McDonald

The first Guide Company in The Basin - 1964. Taken inside old Scout Hall in Church Street.

Photo courtesy Sue Anderson.

Sources of Information

England Hall, and later on the Gymnasium at The Basin Primary School was also used. Storage areas were provided at these two venues. The Scout Hall on The Triangle is now the base for both groups.

Cassandra Aroin was the first 1st The Basin Guide to receive the Baden Powell award in 1996.

Special mention must be made of the service given to The Basin Guide Company by Sue Anderson. She was the first Guide leader in The Basin and was with the company for a total of fifteen years.

Molesworth and David Aroin for Scout and Cub information, Sue Anderson for early Guide & Brownie photos.

Sources of Information

- “The Basin Centenary booklet” - Ron Ikin.
- “Fire on the Hill, Flowers on the Valley” - Rick Coxhill.
- Current and former residents. In particular, Sheila Stancombe for Guide and Brownie information, Des Smith, David Rickard, Phil



Back Row L-R Loraine Jackson, Alice Kingma, Lynette Whittleston, Barbara Cartmel

Front Row L-R Vivian Kirkam, Wendy Frost, Lynda Watson, Mandy Noone

The first Brownie Pack in The Basin - 1964. Taken outside the old Scout Hall in Church Street.

Photo courtesy Sue Anderson.

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