



40 years of Brown Rigg School

Brown Rigg Life - Scouting



Amongst the many extra-curricular activities that took place at Brown Rigg, one of the most popular, certainly for the boys, was the school scout troop, the 2nd Bellingham (Brown Rigg) troop to give it its full title. Brown Rigg and scouting were made for each other, surrounded as it was by miles and miles of wonderful countryside and the river North Tyne just down the road. Given that being in the scouts gave the opportunity to get away from the schools boundaries and the freedom to roam, there was never any shortage of volunteers and shortly after Brown Rigg opened, in February 1949 to be precise, the school unit was registered at Imperial Scout Headquarters with Mr. George Wright as Scoutmaster.

Amongst the other numerous teachers who ran the school troop, two from the 1950's are probably best remembered, Mr. Ron Peer and the legendary Mr. Edward (Ted) Grey a real Mr. Chips of a man who knew how to put into practice Baden-Powell's theory that scouting should be "Legalised Mischief". The troop meetings were usually held on Wednesday evenings, in a former air raid shelter behind the dining hall, and much time was spent building bridges over the Eals Burn which ran along the boundary of Brown Rigg's football pitch or practicing map reading and playing wide games up on the fell. With this wealth of suitable terrain, and ample time to practice, lads were able to enjoy a wide range of scouting activities and quickly became extremely proficient, passing all their badge tests and gaining many successes against other troops at scout camps.



A lot of weekends were spent camping, in little bivouac tents, two man affairs which were decorated with patrol emblems, as were a lot of the blankets the scouts used. Cooking was always done on an open fire and wood collecting became a major activity of any scout camp. Cooking was undertaken in great cast iron "Dixies", large pots which were extremely heavy, more so when filled with water, they had to be carefully balanced on the log fire and the boys had to remember to fit the lid securely otherwise the food had a distinctly "Smokey" taste! On one camp at Greenhaugh the same Dixie that was used to boil the potatoes was used to wash the boys socks, wonder what the food tasted like on that trip! Sometimes the boys practiced basic cooking making flapjacks and dampers out of flour and water.

