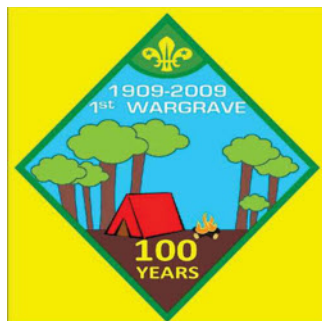


# Wargrave Local History Society

## Latest News - November 2009

### Wargrave Scouts



For the November meeting of the Wargrave Local History Society, Bill Bookless and Nigel Board gave an illustrated presentation about Wargrave Scouts, who have celebrated their centenary this year. Bill is the Group Scout Leader and Nigel is Scout Leader for the troop. The Hannen Room audience included several people who had long association with Scouting in Wargrave.

Bill began by outlining the origins of the Scout Movement. Now a world-wide organisation with something over 25 million members, the idea came to Robert Baden Powell during the Boer War. During the siege of Mafeking, boys would be running messages to and fro, and this became the inspiration for Scouting - aimed to 'give young people a challenge. Baden Powell said that it was "easy enough to give the youngsters pleasure by taking them to the cinema, but we try to train boys and girls not through instruction by bookwork, but by self education through active doing on that which appeals to them'. This led to the famous camp on Brownsea Island in August 1907.

In Wargrave, moves to establish a Scout group began in December 1908, when Leonard Gower asked the curate, Revd Powley to help set up a troop in the village, which was duly formed on 24th February 1909. The troop members were enrolled on 31st March that year - Leonard being the first troop leader.

Many young people from the village had been involved with Scouting over the past 100 years, and several are amongst those whose names are recalled on Remembrance Sunday. In 1947 a 'young Mr Rose' got his Scout Master's certificate, and Buddy still helps the Scout group in Wargrave. In 1953, the first Queen's Scout Award to a member of the Wargrave Troop was presented to Maurice Owen. Other 'notable' dates in the group history were 1963, when the wooden scout hut burnt down, a new one being built the following year at a cost of £1400. This was enlarged in 1976, and again in 2006. There are about 90 members of the Wargrave Scout group currently - and the focus is on providing fun, friendship and adventure for the young people (although it was obvious that the adult leaders also get a lot of enjoyment from it!). Fundamental to Scouting is being part of a world-wide group - there being members in 160 countries.

Bill recounted some of the experiences of working with the Cubs - - one occasion he was 'taking up the rear' to make sure no-one got left behind. Just one small Cub was at the back with him - and eventually wanted a rest. He was a bit tearful, and said that his feet hurt. Bill looked down - took off the Cubs wellies, and put them back on the right feet (!) The boy's smile was a joy, he jumped up and ran off to join the rest - leaving Bill behind! Another Cub was asked by his former Beaver leader if he was enjoying Cubs - "It was great in Beavers, and now I am enjoying Cubs, but when I grow up I am going to be a sprout" he replied !! However, on a camp last year, the Cubs and Scouts were on a hike in rural Ireland, when they met a local walker, who advised them not to go beyond the dry stone wall, as the landowner did not like visitors, and had been known to fire his shotgun at trespassers. One of the Scouts then suggested "We should send the Cubs in first, and when he runs out of bullets, the rest of us can then go on safely" !!!

Bill added that everyone loves a Scout - except, maybe, in Wargrave the Revd. Lowry, as - during an early 1950s Bob-a-Job week - some 'entrepreneurial' Scouts were found in the High Street selling daffodils to raise money for the troop - daffodils that had come from the Vicarage garden. Buddy Rose was summoned to the Vicarage to explain what 'Scouting for Boys' was about !!! The local group, however, do get involved in the wider village community - be it with cream teas, participating in the village festival, or

being part of the Remembrance Day parade.

Nigel (who had himself risen from Cub Scout to Queen's Scout, and Venture Scout) then told us about what the Wargrave Scout Group is doing for today's young people. There is one group of Beavers (6-8 year olds) (and the second group is to re-start in January), two packs of Cubs (8-10½ year olds), and a troop of Scouts (10½ - 14 year olds) - all the groups now having boys and girls in. The programme includes religious awareness, creative expression, fitness, global awareness and outdoor adventure - at least 50% in the last category. Pot-holing, archery, cooking over a camp fire ("twists" being popular), as well as hiking or a global challenge have all featured in the programme. Whilst in Ireland, the Group helped to build a shelter for the local camp site, whilst locally a recent 'community project' has been the provision of a new 'kissing gate' on a popular walk on the edge of the village. From the 'tales' of events on the Ireland camp (eg them all dressed as Vikings' in Dublin, scaring the Celts!), it was clear the Wargrave Scout Group have fun whilst 'learning through, self education' as advocated by Baden Powell.

More information about the Wargrave Scouts and pictures of recent activities can be found at <http://wargravescouts.org>

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The next meeting will be on Tuesday, December 8th, when the Society will hold its Christmas Party, and then on Tuesday, January 12th, Ted Fox will recount some of his memories as My Life as a Countryman, whilst on Tuesday, February 9th, Dick Bush talks about The Work of a Parish Council.