

**Easter Camp – Blairmore 1959**  
**Source: Troop Log (1958-1960)**

Those present at *all of* camp

ASM *Bob Miller*  
PL *Ken Conway*  
PL *Brian Elliot*  
Sec. *Jim Blair,*  
*Tommy Dow*

Those present most of the camp

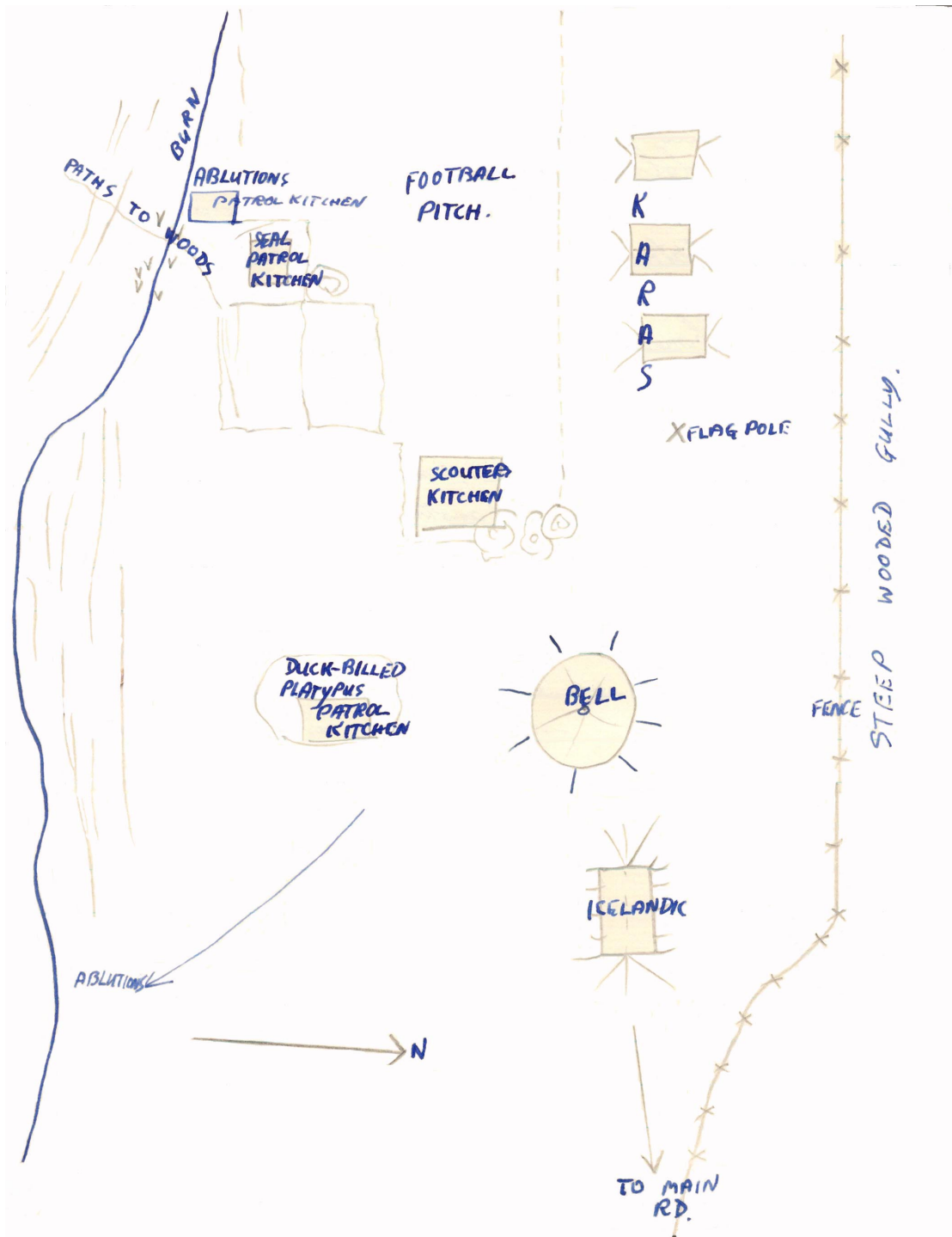
PL *Trevor Jones*  
PL *Hamish Rankin*  
Sec *Stuart Scott*  
*Ian Fraser*  
*John Moore*  
*R. Alan Conway*  
*Michael Hodge*  
*Philip Dry*  
*Roger Hardie*  
*Ronald Weir*  
*Laird McFarlane*

Also in attendance

SM *Ian Blake*  
ASM *Sandy Whiteford*  
ASM *Jim Harvey*

**Editorial Note**

\*Words in Italics have been added or modified by the editor



### Sketch map of campsite

#### Editorial Comments

Photographs reveal that the Seal Patrol kitchen led by Ken Conway was next to the patrol kitchen used by Trevor Jones' Patrol. The Duck-Billed Platypus patrol was led by Hamish Rankin and Brian Elliot, and included Ian Fraser, Laird Mcfarlane, Alan Conway and John Moore. This was the largest patrol in camp and so they used the larger Icelandic Patrol tent. The Kara tents would have been shared by the other two patrols, which appeared to have 4 Scouts each. The Seal patrol consisted of Ken Conway, Stuart Scott, Phillip Dry and Michael Hodge. The un-named patrol led by Trevor Jones included Jim Blair, Tommy Dow and Roger Hardy. The Bell tent was used by the Scouters.

## Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 1959

Left Gourock<sup>1</sup> at 10:35 AM on M.V. "Maid of Ashton"<sup>2</sup>. Arrived at Blairmore pier and boarded lorry<sup>3</sup> for campsite. Set up tents and had dinner of slice<sup>4</sup>, links<sup>5</sup> and bread cooked on a Primus<sup>6</sup>. After this, we put up kitchen shelters<sup>7</sup>, lats<sup>8</sup>, flagpole<sup>9</sup> and got organized for tea.<sup>10</sup>

After tea, we went a walk through the forest road to Kilmun and back via the Coast Road.<sup>11</sup> We arrived back at about 21:00 hours and had campfire and cocoa. Hence to bed.

### *Editorial Notes*

- 1. The Scouts met at Gourock pier at 10 am, well in advance of the departure time (Fox Patrol Log). Ian Blake and Hamish Rankin were not present and travelled to the camp on the Saturday - presumably due to work commitments (Fox Patrol Log).*
- 2. The Maid of Ashton was built at Yarrows Shipbuilders and brought into service in 1953. She was operated by the Caledonian Steam Packet Company as a Passenger Ferry capable of carrying 624 passengers and sailed from Gourock Pier to Craigendoran, Kilcreggan, Kilmun, Blairmore and Hunter's Quay. She was removed from service in 1971 when the emphasis switched from passenger ferries to car ferries. The Maid of Ashton was the first passenger ferry on the Clyde to have radar and had the distinction of having Princess Margaret as a passenger in 1957.*
- 3. The pier masters at some of the Clyde piers had a lorry that could be hired to carry goods and equipment from the pier to a given destination. It seems likely that the lorry concerned here was one such vehicle. Alternatively, coal lorries were commonly available on hire for transporting goods.*
- 4. Slice sausage*
- 5. Normal sausages.*
- 6. A primus in the 1950s ran on paraffin. Before lighting it, the burner head had to be pre heated with burning methylated spirits placed in a 'cup' just below the burner head. Normally the methylated spirits was allowed to burn until it was almost done. At that point the stove was pumped to build up pressure within the paraffin container, such that the paraffin was forced into the burner head. If the burner head was sufficiently hot, the liquid paraffin vaporized as it passed through the burner head and burned as a gas. If the burner head was not sufficiently hot, the paraffin ignited as a liquid and gave a good impression of a flamethrower. Primus stoves were very effective as long as they were shielded from the wind, but they were too temperamental to use inside a tent.*
- 7. At Summer and Easter Camps, the 70<sup>th</sup> Patrols were self sufficient in terms of camping and cooking. Each patrol cooked all its meals over wood fires and had its own kitchen shelter. At Blairmore, trench fires or pit fires seem to have been used and were located in the open, rather than under the shelter. This reduced the risk of setting the shelter on fire but made cooking problematic if it was raining.*
- 8. Latrines*
- 9. Usually this was a suitable tree obtained in the vicinity of the campsite.*
- 10. Dinner was held in the middle of the day and ended to be the main meal in camp during the 1950s. Tea was held in the late afternoon and was a lighter meal.*
- 11. The forest tracks were not shown on the 1 inch to the mile map published during the 1950s. It is assumed that the forestry track currently shown on the map from Blairmore to Kilmun is the same as the one that was present in 1959. If so, the track reached the coast road about a mile east of Kilmun.*

## Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March 1959

Everyone was up bright and early for reveille. Indeed, some of the less experienced campers were too bright and too early. Breakfast was over by 9 o'clock and inspection and flagbreak were held at 10 o'clock.<sup>12</sup>

After a game of football and some free time, we had our dinner<sup>10</sup>. After lunch, we went on a wood expedition<sup>13</sup> returning in time for tea. After this, we went up Kilmun Hill<sup>14</sup> returning at nightfall. A campfire was held and cocoa was served. Weather: Fine day. Bright sunshine. Little wind. Cold.

### Editorial Notes

12. The morning routine in camp usually involved whistles being blown to tell the Patrols that breakfast stores could be collected. The patrols then cooked breakfast and tidied up before three whistles summoned everyone to the flagpole for flagbreak. Inspection followed where the Scouters inspected each patrol tent and patrol shelter to ensure everything was shipshape. The Scouts usually stood at attention in their patrol while inspection took place. They might also have been inspected to make sure that everyone had washed.

13. This was probably wood collection to stock up on firewood for the patrol kitchens. Wood would also have been collected to make 'gadgets'; for example, plate racks, mug trees, fencing etc. The Fox Patrol Log stated that some gadgets were made on the Friday.

14. Kilmun Hill was often climbed when camping at Blairmore as it offered fantastic views down the Clyde. The reference to Kilmun Hill is most likely to refer to the spot height of 1264 feet (385m). In the 1950s, there was open hillside between the campsite and the spot height. Today (as of 2022) the spot height is surrounded by forestry plantation and reaching it might not be so straightforward. A triangulation pillar is present at the spot.

### Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 1959



After some difficulty at getting up, breakfast was cooked. At 10 o'clock sharp, a thorough inspection took place<sup>12</sup>. As this was Easter Sunday, Skipper<sup>15</sup> had a small service<sup>16</sup>. Stuart Scott and Philip Dry returned from their First-Class hike<sup>17</sup> on which they had set out the previous day. Much to Philip Dry's indignation, a large and weighty stone was found at the foot of his rucksack<sup>18</sup>. They also brought back some Sunday papers which were very welcome.

After dinner, there was a wood expedition by which a small quantity of wood, only enough to cook tea, was brought to the camp.

Having had tea, we went a walk to Ardentenny<sup>19</sup> where the cafe<sup>20</sup> was forcibly entered. When we came back, we had a campfire and so to bed.

A good day, cold with some cumulus cloud. Cold at night.

### Editorial Notes

15. Scout Master Ian Blake. Ian Blake arrived on the Saturday along with Hamish Rankin (Fox Patrol Log).

16. This would take the form of a Scout's Own in camp which would be led by Ian Blake and might have involved some of the Scouts contributing in some way; for example, reading a bible passage.

17. The First Class hike was a 2-day unsupervised hike of about 15-18 miles involving 2 Scouts. As part of the hike, the Scouts had to find their own campsite and cook all their meals over wood fires. They also had to hike in full uniform and complete a number of projects. The projects and the route involved were not revealed to the Scouts until they were ready to set off. At that point, they usually opened a sealed envelope to find out what they were required to do. After the hike was over, each Scout had to write a full log book of the route that included information on what had been observed en route, as well as information related to the set projects. All 1<sup>st</sup> Class hikes were set and assessed by a District Examiner.

18. A cartoon in the log books suggests that this was placed in his rucksack before he set off the previous day.

19. Ardentenny is about 3-4 miles north of Blairmore village and 2-3 miles north of the campsite. There is a forestry road that could be taken from Stronchulin, but it is more likely that the Scouts took the coastal road there and back.

20. The café or shop at Ardentenny was often locked with nobody present. However, potential customers could ring a bell that would result in someone coming to open up the café and serve goodies.

## Monday 30<sup>th</sup> of March 1959

After breakfast, Skipper, Tweetie, Trevor, and R. Weir<sup>21</sup> returned to civilization. A good breakfast was had and an inspection followed at 10.05 sharp<sup>12</sup>. Stores were obtained while the remainder of boys went for wood. Enough was obtained to last the whole camp.



In the afternoon, Thomas Dhow<sup>22</sup>, who was swinging on a rope, very cleverly fell into the burn. He was absolutely soaked from the knees down (he fell in headfirst).

Roger Hardy and Michael Hodge passed their second-class<sup>23</sup>. Mrs Conway, accompanied by George<sup>24</sup> paid us a visit in time for campfire at which pancakes were made by Bob Miller. After this, having taken the visitors to the bus, the PLs went on an owl hunt. Needless to say, none was caught although we just about clobbered Eccles<sup>25</sup> who was foolish enough to make owl sounds. We (*Stuart Scott, Brian Elliot, Ken Conway and Bob Miller*) then went to Blairmore where we phoned Greenock.

So to bed.

A good fresh day with a mist at night. Pretty cold.

### Editorial Notes

21. Ian Blake (*Skipper*), Hamish Rankin (*Tweetie*), Trevor Jones, and Ronald Weir caught the ferry back to Gourrock. Ian Blake certainly had work to return to. The others may have had similar commitments.

22. Tommy Dow's name was frequently spelt wrongly in the log books.

23. The Second Class Badge followed on from the Tenderfoot Badge in the Scout progressive Training Scheme. Scouts usually gained it within a year or two of being in Scouts.

24. Mrs Conway was the mother of Ken, Alan and George Conway, all of whom were 70<sup>th</sup> Scouts. Kenneth and Alan were at Blairmore. George was still in the Wolf Cubs at this stage. George eventually became PL of the Seal Patrol during the 1960s.

25. Eccles was the nickname for Bob Miller

## Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> of March 1959



It was raining when we got up. The rain stopped to allow us to cook breakfast but it then continued. The Kara tents<sup>26</sup> became uninhabitable because of ground dampness.<sup>27</sup>

Dinner<sup>10</sup> was cooked in the Scouters kitchen and ASM Miller decided to send the younger boys home. They were escorted to the pier<sup>28</sup> where they boarded M.V. "Maid of Ashton" for home.

The five<sup>29</sup>, including Bob, who remained went for stores and took a bus home to camp. The farmer<sup>30</sup> was (paid) and thanked for the use of his field.

At night, we cooked a dumpling<sup>31</sup>, ate about half of it and went to bed at 11:30.

Today, Alan Conway passed his second-class.

As you may have gathered, it rained today.



**Figure** The Dumpling Eaters - Bob Miller and Sandy Whiteford (31<sup>st</sup> March 1959).

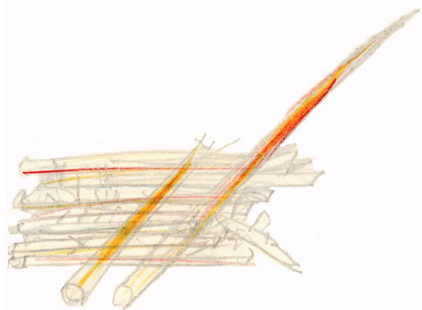
*Editorial Notes*

- 26. The Kara tents were larger than hike tents but smaller than patrol tents. They accommodated about 4 Scouts each.
- 27. Presumably, drainage was an issue resulting in pools of water accumulating that flowed into the tents.
- 28. Blairmore Pier (about a mile's trek)
- 29. ASM Bob Miller, ASM Sandy Whiteford, Scout Alan Conway, PL Ken Conway, and PL Brian Elliot.
- 30. Unfortunately the name of the farmer was not recorded.
- 31. Cooking a dumpling in camp had become a bit of a tradition that lasted well into the 1970s. Possibly, Bob Miller was responsible for instigating the tradition.

**Wednesday 1st of April 1959**

After a great start, April Fools' Day, everyone set to work. The fools<sup>32</sup>, Conway senior<sup>33</sup> and Elliot, cleaned all the dixies while the wise men filled the lats. Trevor accompanied by his young brother<sup>34</sup> came back to assist breaking camp. He also was a fool, although a kind hearted one.

For dinner, we had tomatoes and mulligatawny soup, mixed with beans, rice, oranges, pineapple, and dumpling.



**Figure** Wood left at end of Camp

Having inspected the site, we loaded the lorry to take us to Blairmore where we boarded the boat home.

General opinion of camp was good.

It is the second camp at which we have been flooded out since our foundation<sup>34</sup>5.

“Oh! It rained all Sunday  
And it rained all Monday  
.....”

Second-class badges were presented to –  
M. Hodge (Seal)  
Roger Hardie (Kingfisher)  
R. Alan Conway (Fox)

See also note 36

*Editorial Notes*

32. *So called because it was April Fools Day.*

33. *Kenneth Conway*

34. *It was Trevor Jones that returned to help out. The name of his young brother was not recorded and there is no evidence of him joining the troop.*

35. *The first would have been the Summer Camp of 1956 at West Loch Tarbert*

36. *The Scribe who wrote up the report on the Blairmore Easter Camp did not identify himself, but it was almost certainly Kenneth Conway based on the writing style.*

The following pictures were taken at the 1959 Easter camp - probably on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March 1959

Believed to be the Duck-Billed Platypus Patrol led by Hamish Rankin and Brian Elliot with Scouts Alan Conway, John Moore, Ian Fraser and Laird McFarlane.



Figure Alan Conway and Ian Fraser with John Moore in the background



PL Hamish Rankin , Ian Fraser (hidden), Laird McFarlane, PL Brian Elliot, John Moore.



Laird Mcfarlane? and Brian Elliot



Alan Conway (mostly hidden), PL Brian Elliot, John Moore, Laird Mcfarlane, PL Hamish Rankin Laird Mcfarlane? And Brian Elliot

**Editorial note**

These photos suggest that this was the Duck-Billed Platypus patrol, and that it was camping in the Icelandic tent downhill (to the east) from the other tents.





Tommy Dow, Second Jim Blair, PL Trevor Jones, SM Ian Blake, Roger Hardie.



Tommy Dow, Jim Blair, Roger Hardie and Trevor Jones



Tommy Dow and Jim Blair with Trevor Jones in background.



Roger Hardie And Jim Blair

*Editorial notes*

*Photos of the un-named patrol led by Trevor Jones, which included Jim Blair, Tommy Dow and Roger Hardie. This patrol would have camped in 1 or 2 of the Kara tents. Their kitchen shelter was closest to the stream (close to the Seal Patrol kitchen)*



PL Brian Elliot (Been).



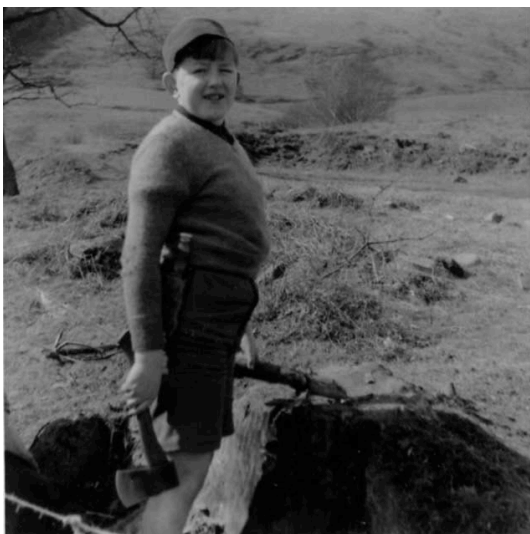
PL Hamish Rankin (Tweet)



PL Kenneth Conway (Seal Patrol)



Alan Conway



Tommy Dow! (All of him).



PL Ken Conway, Philip Dry, Stuart Scott, Michael Hodge. Our worthy hikers (P. Dry and S. Scott)  
Taken at Seal Patrol kitchen shelter



Michael Hodge, Stuart Scott, Ken Conway, Philip Dry. (Trevor Jones and co in background)  
Taken at Seal Patrol kitchen shelter



'Wha' daur meedl wi me'. Philip Dry and ASM Bob Miller chopping wood (Trevor Jones' kitchen shelter in background).



“Sweeney Todd” Rankin at work on Bob Miller. Possibly a shaving brush suspended above his nose. Also Hamish Rankin, Brian Elliot, Roger Hardie, Philip Dry and Michael Hodge. Farm house and Kara tent in background



Michael Hodge, Sec. Ian Fraser, Ken Conway, Roger Hardie



Philip Dry and Alan Conway

### *Potted Biographies of those attending camp*

#### **Blair Jim (Sec),**

*Jim Blair was Second of the Kingfisher Patrol in 1959 and had been promoted to that position in 1956 at the age of 12. He was promoted to PL of the Kingfisher in September 1959, and was also appointed Troop Leader. He also gained his Queen Scout's Award which may have been awarded to him by the Chief Scout at Everton campsite. He attended numerous camps and participated in the Shannon Cup competitions of 1957 and 1958. Jim resigned in the summer of 1960. He did not become a Scouter, but in later years, he joined the Parents Committee and became its chairman.*

#### **Blake, Ian (SM)**

*Ian Blake was a Scout in the 70<sup>th</sup> during the 1930s, and Scout Master from 1953 to 1959. He moved to Trinidad at the end of 1959 with his family and returned home in 1963 after a 3-year work contract there. He did not get involved in Scouting after his resignation in 1959.*

#### **Conway, R. Alan**

*Alan Conway was in the Fox Patrol having moved up from the Cubs in June 1958. He would have been aged about 12 in 1959. He went on to become PL of the Seal Patrol and gained his Queen's Scout Badge. He was also the only 70<sup>th</sup> Scout to attend a World Jamboree overseas prior to the 1980s.*

#### **Conway, Kenneth (PL of the Seal Patrol)**

*Kenneth Conway was PL of the Seal Patrol. He joined the troop round about 1954 and was promoted to Second in January 1956, then to PL of the Seal Patrol during October 1956. At this point he would have been aged about 13. He remained PL of the Seal for 4 years and was appointed Troop Leader in September 1959. He resigned in April 1960 to take charge of a Senior Scout Patrol, and may have left the group in the summer of 1960. Kenneth gained his Queen Scout's Badge in 1959 and attended several camps, including 2 Shannon Cups. He led the 70<sup>th</sup> patrol at the Shannon Cup of 1958. Kenneth's patrol also won the Patrol of the Year Competition for the 1958-59 session.*

#### **Dow, Tommy**

*Tommy Dow's name was often spelt wrongly in the log books. His father was the Reverend James L. Dow of Cartsburn Augustine Church. Tommy probably joined the 70<sup>th</sup> from another troop in May 1958 and was in the Kingfisher Patrol. He gained his 1<sup>st</sup> Class Badge in April 1959, and was promoted to Second in September 1959. In April 1960, he was promoted to PL of the Kingfisher Patrol. He was a keen camper and appeared to be a popular, outgoing, larger than life character. He probably resigned at the end of August 1960, aged 16.*

#### **Dry, Philip**

*Philip Dry's nicknames included 'Dry', 'Drip'. 'Wet' and 'Drip Dry'. He might have joined the troop in 1955 or 1956, but it is not known which patrol he was in at that point. In September 1959, he was promoted to Second of the Seagull Patrol. He attended several camps and was the troop librarian in 1960. It is thought that he left the troop during August 1960.*

#### **Elliot Brian (PL)**

*Brian Elliot was nicknamed 'Bean' and was PL of the Curlew Patrol. He joined the Troop in 1955, and was promoted to Second in 1956, then to PL in February 1957 at the age of 13. He gained his 1<sup>st</sup> Class Badge in February 1959 at the same time as his Venturer Badge but it is not known whether he completed his Queen's Scout Badge. Brian attended several camps and participated in the Shannon Cup for 3 years in a row (1957, 1958 and 1959). He resigned in January 1960.*

#### **Fraser, Ian**

*Ian Fraser was a member of the Falcon Patrol in 1959, and was about 12 years old. He went on to become the PL of the Falcon Patrol in April 1960 and remained PL for close on 4 years. During that period, he was also appointed as Troop Leader. He gained his Queen's Scout Badge and attended numerous camps including the Shannon Cup competition of 1959 where the 70<sup>th</sup> came second. He was also in the successful signalling team that lifted the signalling trophy in 1961. In June 1964, he joined the Scouter team and was an ASM until at least 1966.*

#### **Hardie, Roger**

*Roger Hardie was aged about 12 in 1959 and was in the Kingfisher Patrol. He gained his Second Class Badge at the Blairmore Camp, but he probably left the troop in the summer of 1959.*

#### **Harvey, Jim (ASM)**

*Jim would have been aged about 19 in 1959. He had been a Scout in the 70<sup>th</sup> and in September 1955, he was promoted to be the first PL of a newly formed Kingfisher Patrol. He also led the Shannon Cup team that came second in 1957. He gained his 1<sup>st</sup> Class Badge, but it is not known whether he gained his Queen Scout's Badge. He joined the ranks of the Scouters in 1957 and remained an ASM until October 1960.*

#### **Hodge Michael**

*Michael Hodge (Hoji) probably joined the Troop in 1958. He was promoted to Second in September 1961 and had a reputation for performing a 'war dance'. It is thought that he left the troop during the 1961-62 session.*

**Jones, Trevor (PL)**

*Trevor Jones was nicknamed 'Sherpa'. Trevor was PL of the Kingfisher Patrol having been promoted in October 1956, when he would have been about 13. As a result, he was PL for 4 years. Trevor gained his 1<sup>st</sup> Class badge in September 1959 and attended numerous camps and activities. He also led the 70<sup>th</sup> patrol that came second in the Shannon Cup Competition of 1959. He resigned about the summer of 1960.*

**McFarlane, Laird**

*Laird McFarlane was 2<sup>nd</sup> Scout in the Fox Patrol in early 1959. He joined the troop in 1957 and attended a number of camps and activities including the Shannon Cup Competition of 1958. He may have left the troop during the summer of 1959.*

Miller, Bob (ASM)

**Moore, John**

*John Moore joined the troop in 1957 or 1958. In September 1961, he was promoted to PL and it is likely that he remained PL until the summer of 1963.*

**Rankin, Hamish (PL)**

*Hamish Rankin was nicknamed Tweet or Tweetie and transferred from another troop to the 70<sup>th</sup> in 1954. He was promoted to Second in 1955 and to PL of the Falcon Patrol in 1956 at the age of 13. He was considered the Troop's expert on outdoor activities and attended most if not all of the camps and activities on offer. He is believed to have led the patrol that won the Shannon Cup in 1956, and certainly led the patrol that came second in 1957. He was also one of the four 70<sup>th</sup> Scouts to attend the World Jamboree of 1957. Hamish resigned in April 1960 to join a patrol of Senior Scouts and probably left the 70<sup>th</sup> that summer.*

**Scott, Stuart (Sec)**

*Stuart Scout was aged about 16 in 1959 and was Second of the Seal Patrol (having been promoted in 1957). In September 1959, he was promoted to PL of the Seagull Patrol and it is likely that he gained his 1<sup>st</sup> Class Badge. In April 1960, he joined a newly formed Senior Scout Patrol, but may have left the Group in the summer of that year.*

**Weir, Ronald**

*Ronald Weir probably joined the Fox Patrol in February 1959. However, he left the troop during the 1959-60 session.*

**Whiteford, Sandy (ASM)**

*ASM Sandy Whiteford was an ASM with the 70<sup>th</sup> from October 1957 to 1960. Prior to that he had been a Scout in Rothesay before transferring to the 70<sup>th</sup> where he was rapidly promoted to PL in 1953, then Troop Leader in 1955. He received his Queen's Scout certificate from the Chief Scout (Lord Rowallan) in 1954. Sandy attended most camps and outdoor activities and played a part in controlling the numbers of rabbits in the countryside.*