

EASTER CAMP 1959

Dates – Friday 27th March – Wednesday 1st April 1959

(although for young boys it ended on Tuesday 31st March owing to a “slight shower” of rain)

Friday 27th March



The boys¹ met at Gourrock pier at 10 o'clock on Friday, March 27. It was a dullish morning though. We got the steamer² at 10.35 and arrived about 11 o'clock. The boys got the lorry³ to Blairmore farm⁴ where we pitched camp. After pitching camp, we had dinner, settled down and made a few gadgets⁵. After tea, we explored⁶, had cocoa, and so to bed.

Editorial comments

1. The boys are likely to have been Ken Conway, Brian Elliot, Jim Blair, Tommy Dow, Trevor Jones, Stuart Scott, Ian Fraser, John Moore, Alan Conway, Michael Hodge, Philip Dry, Roger Hardie, Ronald Weir and Laird McFarlane. As far as the Scouters were concerned, Bob Miller was present and possibly Sandy Whiteford and Jim Harvey.

2. Maid of Ashton

3. Believed to have been hired from the Pier master

4. About a mile north of Blairmore Pier and up the hill a bit.

5. Ian Blake was insistent that each Patrol should make gadgets that had some kind of purpose.

These were usually made from wood and sisal. A very simple gadget was the mug tree or mug holder, which was just a small branch stuck in the ground (see sketch).

6. The exploration involved walking the forestry road to Kilmun, then back by the coast road (about 6 miles).

Saturday 28 March 1959



Skipper⁷ and Tweetie⁸ arrived. Ken Con.⁹ and Been¹⁰ went for stores.¹¹ Remainder chopped wood and played games. It was a grand day. S. Scott and P. Dry¹² went 1st class hike¹³.

Editorial comments

7. Scout Master Ian Blake was presumably working on the Friday and could not come until the Saturday

8. 'Tweetie' was the nickname for Hamish Rankin.

9. Kenneth Conway, P.L. of the Seal Patrol in camp

10. 'Been' was the nickname of Brian Elliott

11. Presumably, they walked into Blairmore to collect stores.

12. Stuart Scott and Phillip Dry

13. 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 1st Class hikes were set and assessed by a District Examiner.

Sunday, 29 March 1959

S. Scott and P. Dry¹² arrived back¹⁴ bringing some welcome Sunday papers. Skipper¹⁵ had a small service¹⁶.

Editorial comments

14. From their overnight 1st Class hike.

15. Scout Master Ian Blake

16. This was a Scout's Own to mark Easter Sunday. It may have involved a hymn, reading and a chat from Ian Blake. Some of the Scouts were probably involved in giving the reading or the prayer.

Monday 30th March 1959



Skipper¹⁵ and Tweetie⁸ left¹⁷ with Ronnie Weir and Trevor¹⁸. Mrs Conway and George¹⁹ came in time for camp fire when Eccles²⁰ made pancakes and Been¹⁰ cocoa. Roger Hardie and Michael Hodge passed 2nd class²¹. Thos. Dow²², who was swinging on rope, fell in burn²³. P.L.'s went owl hunting²⁴.

Editorial comments

17. To catch the ferry back from Blairmore to Gourock.

18. Trevor Jones

19. Mrs Conway was the mother of Ken, Alan and George Conway, all of whom were 70th 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.

20. 'Eccles' was the nickname for ASM Bob Miller.

21. 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.

22. Thomas Dow was aged 14 or 15 during 1959 and probably transferred to the 70th from another Scout Troop. He was yet to get promoted.

23. Based on the sketch, this must have been the stream running down a small gorge to the north of the campsite.

24. This might have been a project dreamt up by Bob Miller who had a knack of coming up with quirky reasons for going on a hike. No owls were spotted, despite Bob's efforts to impersonate an owl.

Tuesday 31st March 1959

Lashed all day. Eccles²⁰ decided young Scouts better go home²⁵. Only 5 left²⁶, not counting Bob. One bright spot – I passed second class.²⁷

Editorial comments

25. This was in the afternoon. It was a wise decision as the rain continued to teem down for the rest of the camp

26. The five were Ken Conway, Brian Elliott, Jim Blair, Tommy Dow and Sandy Whiteford.

27. The scribe was Alan Conway. By gaining his 2nd Class Badge at the camp, he had passed both his Tenderfoot and Second Class Badges in under a year which was extremely fast. It is assumed that Alan was one of the Scouts who returned to civilization on the Tuesday as he would have been aged about 12 at the time.

Wednesday 1st April 1959



Still raining. Trevor¹⁸ went back to assist breaking camp.²⁸

General opinion of camp. Pretty good

Alan Conway 3rd Scout²⁹

Patrol represented by	A. Conway	-	3 rd Scout
	R. Weir	-	4 th Scout
	L. McFarlane		2 nd Scout.

Editorial comments

²⁸. Apparently, Trevor's young brother was also present to assist breaking camp.

²⁹. Alan Conway appears to have written the account of the various days in camp.