

Having read the report of such an old and established club as the Oxford Scout and Guide Group, I think it might be interesting and useful to compare the aims and activities of a club which is now in only its fourth year: Aston University S & G Club. The structure of the committee is "traditional", inasmuch as we have a committee of six, elected at the A.G.M. in March, whose term of office begins the next September.

Upon analysis, our aims can also be divided threefold into the same categories, viz social, service to others and training for ourselves. Our social activities are probably similar to other clubs and include visits to barn dances, factories and the theatre, ten-pin bowling and ice skating evenings, camps, hikes, talks and an annual dinner. Our service projects are directed in two distinct directions - service within the Scout and Guide Movements and service outside the Movements. The former takes the form of arranging an activity for one of the troops of Extension Scouts in Birmingham, usually once a term. In the past these have included a visit to the Zoo, "Orienteering" (yes, even in wheelchairs!) and a musical afternoon with their own home made instruments. Service projects outside the Movement are done under the auspices of "Action Force", a group of young volunteers in Birmingham who do useful work for elderly people in need. Such projects are carried out about once a term. However, activities for the direct purpose of training ourselves do not feature in our programme, unless you count a revision session on first aid and, possibly one or two talks, e.g. on the probation service and on Extension Scouting and a teach-in on youth work. Thus, for training ourselves, we rely indirectly on our other activities rather than activities directed specifically to that purpose.

One difference between new and old clubs is the difference in numbers. We have a nominal membership of thirty, of whom there are about a dozen regulars. Is it that the older clubs have found the answer as to how to attract new members and keep old members? Perhaps there should be more long-term planning of programmes with greater emphasis on variety (not like one club which has its "Freshers Hike" over the same route at the same time and day every year!) Perhaps there should be more emphasis on self-training - a purpose appropriate to University and College students. Perhaps there should be more emphasis on Scouting and Guiding or, alternatively, a playing down of these aspects in an attempt to attract a wider membership. All these are problems which face new committees in new clubs when planning programmes and publicity. There may be no answers to cover clubs generally, a different answer being appropriate to different clubs and even to different years of one club's existence. But, if any of the older clubs think they have found the solution to any of these problems, I feel sure that budding ones would welcome their assistance and advice as to how to attain full bloom.

Exter - C.M.V.-S.

After writing at great length, and with some pride, of our activities
term, I feel morally obliged to give a reasonably accurate account of this
programme in order that justice is done to the true state of affairs. Not
the programme has been either uninteresting or poorly attended, but rather
a combination of exogenous factors have meant that, of nearly a dozen planned
activities, only two or three took place as and when arranged. For instance
attempts to get a speaker on Orienteering were marred by the Postal Strike
service project at a local scout hut rendered impractical by six inches of
and an afternoon's activities for local Scouts and Guides proscribed by the
unwillingness of local Commissioners to co-operate on the weekend we had
The rest of this term's failings can be fairly attributed to the somewhat
organisation of the club resulting from our small membership. Thus, activities
are limited, and there seems little hope of support from local college clubs

We are cut off.....Help!

Newcastle - R.H.

Activities this year have been many and varied, both scouting and guiding and social. Last term we entertained 30 Cubs for a day; they seem inexhaustible unlike ourselves! The activities we provided for them ranged from kite-making to backwoods cooking. A night hike was held earlier this term, enjoyable in retrospect, although at 5.0.a.m. not everyone was so sure about it. Another successful (and energetic) event was a joint meeting with the University Scottish Country Dancing Club. Talks this year have included a controversial one by John Sweet; an account from one of our members of her part in Malaysia on V.S.O., and an illustrated talk on the changing face of Newcastle given by a planning officer from the Civic Centre. Altogether this year seems to have continued our tradition of a flourishing and active club.

Nottingham

The Scout and Guide here at Nottingham has about 20 active members - with another 20 sleeping on the books! The committee has tried to involve everyone in outside activities such as helping with a Handicapped Scout Troup, supporting the Local Association with wide games and the local scouters and guiders with sherry parties. Members have helped to a much greater extent in the running of the club. This help has taken the form of organising a fantasmagorical SSAGO Rally last term, decorating our newly acquired club den, planning the Scout and Guides Own, and beginning the Penine Way Project. The latter is intended to provide all club members with a common aim. All our hikes and Easter Youth Hostelling expeditions are directed towards part of the Penine Way. In the near future we intend to go underground - on a visit to a coalmine. Alternatively this hot air could go up with our planned Ballon Debate!

The object of this article is to describe the complex programme of the Group and to stimulate other clubs.

The Group, which is now in its 50th year, has a membership of about 75. There are a wide variety of activities and so many meetings that it is hard to keep tabs on them all, and virtually impossible to attend everything.

We overcame this problem by producing a terminal card and a newsletter every other week. Our aims are divided into three parts, which overlap considerably: social, service to others and training for ourselves. Each secretary is elected for a term, plans the next term's programme, and then becomes chairman for the following term. We have no "committee members" as such, but each officer has a job, e.g., Membership Secretary, Discussion Group Organiser, etc., so having a secretary for one term only does not lose continuity, as these officers last for a year and are elected at different times in the year. These are all responsible to the programme committee.

The main social meetings are on Monday night in our den, a fairly large, dusty, old hall. Luckily we are the only people who use it and thus we can leave our possessions behind (coffee, cups, etc.). Monday night meetings have included recently speakers on "The Advance Party Report", "Mixed Activities", folk music and tape recording, visits to a local rifle range, parties, formal dinner and a members' evening. We normally get an attendance of about 25 to these meetings. One of the most popular social activities of the Group is country dancing which is held every week in the den. In spite of the general shortage of women in Oxford the numbers are usually balanced, but occasional disasters occur. Another popular activity is Literary and Musical evening which are held twice a term on Sunday evenings in someone's room. These are NOT as serious as they sound. The organiser brings along some music (records or tape) and extracts from books on almost anything. Topics - well titles - have been e.g., "Children" and "Spool your resources". Discussion Groups are held on two other Sunday nights, when a small group discuss, starting but not staying on a topic. We used to have a form of discussion meeting on Thursday lunchtime, coffee served - bring your own food. These are called "Nosh and Natters" and though no formal discussion occurs now a great deal of day-to-day Group business is done.

Surely though, we cannot survive without a purpose and this is covered by the work of the "Training Unit", organised by a Training Unit Leader. In practice we act as a part-time District Service team, running two or three major events a term, which have included:- Mixed Activities. These were organised to encourage the local Rangers and Venture Scouts to do more joint activities - Cub Scout Scientist Badge Course. This was great fun and really appreciated by the District. We have now been asked to demonstrate this at a Wood Badge Course - Service weekend, where we rolled up our sleeves and worked at a local Guide Camp site - and of course, the Halloween Party. Future plans include Brownie Revels, a Guide Adventure Day and a Venture Scout Leadership Course. The whole training unit programme is planned a year in advance, to allow plenty of time for preparation and most important for advertising to groups concerned. This section is so successful because members join a Scout and Guide Club from an interest in Scouting and Guiding, and not just for a gay social life (although this certainly helps).

Finally, we also train ourselves to be better leaders. We have attended Practical Training Courses and a First Aid Course recently. Now we are looking forward to an "Introduction to Guiding" course, run for Scouters by the local Guiders (a must for wouldbe V.S.L.s)

Well that's our Group for you. We are sorry if the sentences are not coherent, but both of us are mathematicians.

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