

THE FIRST TEN.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST YEARS OF
NORTH EAST CHESHIRE DISTRICT ASSOCIATION
OF THE CAMPING CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

10p.

History

The first edition of the history of the organization was published in 1910. It was a small book, only 20 pages long, and it was written by the first president, Mr. J. W. ...

This being our tenth anniversary year, it was thought that the occasion should not go by without some account being given of these first ten years.

We apologise in advance for any omissions that some of you may think important. We have tried to set down the most important factors as they appeared to us, and are grateful for the help we have had in doing this.

Connie Pickles
Norman Pickles
Harry Tyrie

The history of the organization is a story of growth and development. It has been a long and interesting journey, and we are proud of what has been achieved in these ten years.

PREFACE

To put into booklet form the history of a D.A. within the Camping Club, you must first enlighten the reader why the formation of a D.A. must be introduced. It is to serve an area which becomes increasingly difficult to handle.

The introduction of a new D.A. will offer to the member more sites without the stress of overcrowding, this is made possible by the formation of a committee to deal with the smooth running of a section formed from members of the parent D.A. For the comparatively new member of the Camping Club, the history of his particular D.A. is only part of the information he requires to build up a full picture of the events which lead to the formation of his particular D.A..

To do this we must go back to pre 1939 days when the North West Region as we now know it consisted of one D.A. only i.e. I&C and N. Wales D.A.. In these early days Club membership was small and the problems of overcrowding at D.A. meets something that was never envisaged.

In these early days to become a member of the Club, you had to be proposed and seconded by other members as to your suitability before being accepted. With the increasing popularity of camping these restrictions were greatly relaxed and membership increased rapidly, so much so that I&C and N. Wales D.A. was unable to cope and two more D.A.'s had to be formed. These were Liverpool D.A. and North Lancs. D.A. making three D.A.'s in the North West of England. Regional status was granted in 1946, and the first Regional Chairman was Mrs. Mitchell.

These pressures of increasing membership are continuous and with attendance figures at D.A. meets becoming more of a problem we arrive at a situation when the formation of a new section becomes a necessity.

Joe. Piggott.
former Chairman N.W. Region
former Chairman N.E. Cheshire D.A.

THE FORMATION OF A NEW SECTION

Early in January 1962 an advertisement was placed in the Manchester Evening News, stating that a meeting was to be held on the 26th January, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Matthews, 87, Solway Road, Cross Acres, Manchester, and inviting anyone interested in forming a new Section of the Camping Club of Gt. Britain and Ireland to attend.

Twenty five members of Lancs. and Cheshire D.A. attended this meeting, and it was agreed that a Section should be formed. The reason given was that Lancs. and Cheshire was getting so big, that late comers to camping meets just couldn't find a decent spot to pitch and were invariably forced into the middle of the field.

The first business was to elect a committee, and that committee was, Mr. and Mrs. F. Matthews, Mr. and Mrs. N. Pickles, Mr. and Mrs. K. Stennett, Mr. and Mrs. F. Venner, Mr. J. Piggott, and Mr. Mr. F. Inman.

A lot of discussion took place as to what title be given to the new Section, and eventually all agreed that it be called North East Cheshire Section. The only other business at this meeting was to compile a small list of Standing Orders. No list of members attending was kept, but Lancs. and Cheshire D.A. was represented at the meeting by their Chairman Mr. Albert Payne, and Secretary Mr. Bill Wall. The new Section was formed with the D.A.'s blessing and remained under their wing until becoming a separate D.A..

The first committee meeting was held on the 20th February 1962, again at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Matthews. Frank Venner was elected Chairman and Frank Matthews, secretary; a list of camp sites was drawn up, and it was agreed that an application be made to the D.A. for a £5 grant to be used as working capital. It was also agreed that a levy of 3d per unit be charged at camping meets.

The next committee meeting was held at the first camping meet of the Section, this was at Chelford on the 25th March 1962. It was a wintery weekend but nineteen units braved the elements. The meeting on Sunday morning was held in the Barn as it was snowing heavily. Thirty five members attended, muffled up and sitting on bales of hay. The secretary read the minutes of all that had transpired to date, and the Standing Orders to put everyone in the

picture. The meeting was told that Lancs. and Cheshire D.A. had granted us £5 and two latty tents.

At the committee meeting held on 13th September 1962, Mr. and Mrs. H. Brown were co-opted on to the committee, and it was agreed that all Lancs. and Cheshire D.A. social activities be supported, but it was felt that an out of season Section re-union be held. The New Inn Langley was suggested for this event.

The first A.G.M. was held in the Chelford village hall on the 30th September 1962 with fifty members present. Connie Pickles was given permission to make arrangements for the Section's first annual Dinner to be held on Saturday 8th December at the New Inn Langley, this was to be a Christmas Dinner with all the trimmings. The committee was congratulated for the work they had done in forming the new Section, and were voted back en-bloc. A list of winter walks was drawn up, and the statement of accounts was read, very different from our present accounts. It was as follows :-

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>			<u>ASSETS</u>				
	L	S	D		L	S	D
Secs. expenses, post and Minute Book		14	8	D.A. grant	5	0	0
Site Secs. Expenses		13	0	Income from voluntary			
Cash in hand	6	2	1	Section fund.	2	9	9
	<u>£7</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>		<u>£7</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>

So ended the Section's first year of camping.

The Dinner was held, and it was a huge success, so much so that another was asked for. This was arranged for Sunday 3rd March 1963, to be preceded by a walk. This walk took place in deep snow, and did they enjoy that dinner !.

1963 was a normal camping year with no special highlights and as no fixture list has survived, no more information is available.

At the committee meeting held on the 30th September 1963, the secretary reported that a request for D.A. status had been made to the parent D.A.. After some discussion regarding boundaries, it was submitted that it be all Cheshire east of a line

drawn from Kidsgrove to Bowden, including Manchester 22 and 23.

At the next committee meeting a letter from Lancs. and Cheshire D.A. was read. This stated that they thought the easiest solution was that the proposed new D.A. take over the whole of Cheshire. This was objected to strongly by Joe Piggott, who stated that if Cheshire were taken from Lancs. and Cheshire, only Manchester and a small portion of Lancashire would remain, and as Lancs. and Cheshire were the oldest D.A. in the country, he did not want to take all Cheshire from them, as this would mean a change of name for them.

At the committee meeting held on the 4th December 1963 a new edition map of Cheshire was displayed, showing the M6 motorway, and a proposal from Lancs. and Cheshire D.A. was read. This stated that as Cheshire was now divided by the motorway, this should form our boundary line, and that our area be all Cheshire east of the M6. This was agreed.

During the two year life of the Section, the big meets of the parent D.A. were supported, as were their Socials. Film shows were organised by Dudley Boardman, and winter walks were undertaken by the Section. The committee remained stable, with the addition of Mr. and Mrs. D. Boardman and Mr. and Mrs. S. Levatt at the 1963 A.G.M.

NORTH EAST CHESHIRE DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

A snap committee meeting was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. N. Pickles on the 18th March, as the secretary had received a letter from the National Council approving our application for D.A. status.

An inaugural meeting was held at the Anson Hall, Longsight, on Wednesday 13th May 1964. Forty two members attended, including Mr. Rigg Chairman N.W. Region, Mr. Payne Chairman L. and C. D.A., Mr. Wall Secretary L. and C. D.A., and Mr. Potty National Councillor. As it was mid-season the committee were re-elected en-bloc. A decision was made to discontinue the levy, and introduce a Social Box for voluntary contributions. Members were asked to submit designs for the D.A. pennon. Harold Brown was elected treasurer.

The first D.A. meet was held at Stainforth Hall near Settle. Nearly forty units attended in fine weather. On Sunday picnickers came on the site, parked between the tents and used the latties. Apparently it was the farmer's custom to allow picnickers on this field and charge them a parking fee.

This was Lancs. and Cheshire's Golden Jubilee year. It was celebrated at their Mid-summer Meet. Our D.A. joined them on this occasion to wish them "Good Luck" for the next fifty years.

The first D.A. Christmas Party was held at the Victory Hall Moberly. Two hundred and twenty four persons were seated for tea which was prepared and served by the committee. The hall had been decorated by the men and the youth of the D.A..

During this first season it was noted that a lot of young campers were with us, so it was decided to form a Youth Section. Mr. and Mrs. R. Kewley were duly appointed Youth Leaders.

There was a good response for pennon designs. Two were finally chosen for submission to the Regional Council, and their choice, with an alteration to the style of lettering is the one we have now. The design was submitted by Mr. Kinder.

The 1965 camping season was a memorable one. At an early meet at Beeston, in the shadow of the castle, the camp was disturbed at midnight by much clattering and banging. A large

lorry was parked just outside the field, and men were unload- things on to the roadway. This was the time of the Great Train Robbery, so imaginations were running wild. It was not until some more lorries arrived that it was realised that the Army were on manoeuvres, and the noise that had disturbed the camp was the arrival of the cook-house.

Then there was the meet at Hulme End when bright lights were observed descending from the sky on a very dark night. No not an invasion from Mars, only the Army once again with flares and vercy lights at the Army range near Royal Cottage.

Easter 1965 was a joint meet with Birmingham D.A. at Alstonfield. This was a sloping field with no shelter. A gale was blowing full blast across the valley, bringing rain and sleet with it. Every arrival was met With all hands to get tents erected. Many returned home defeated by the elements The farmer had brought his cattle into the Shippon for protection, this made the water tap just one yard from the back end of a cow. The final straw came when the steward, dipping his measure into the milk churn, came out with a bar of soap. The weather was so bad that by Sunday everyone had packed up and made for home a day early.

This was the year that the National F.O.L. was held at Blackpool. The D.A. had a working party out marking pitches, etc. and the Youth Leader Roy Kewley with the help of some members, rigged up the field telephones, and lines all over the camp. The D.A. Pennon was erected for the first time at this meet, and Mr. Rigg the N.W. Region Chairman was given this honour at a little ceremony held to mark the occasion. Fifty two members were present at the 1965 A.G.M. held at the Victory Hall Mobberly. The chairman Frank Venner did not seek re-election. Harold Brown was elected in his place, and Norman Pickles became treasurer, with Frank Matthews secretary.

Frank was struck down with a serious illness in January 1966, and Harold Brown resigned the chair, this left the D.A. in an un-enviable position. Thanks to some quick thinking and a lot of running about by Norman and Connie Pickles, Joe Piggott agreed to take over as Chairman and Maurice Green undertook the secretarial duties.

Frank Matthews returned to the committee in the July of this year, but after a comparatively short time he was struck down again, and soon the D.A. was to hear of his untimely death.

No words can express the loss this was to the D.A. for Frank was wholly dedicated to camping, and the Club. In all his work for the D.A. he had the full support, and encouragement of Mrs. Matthews, who we have great pleasure in seeing from time to time at our social evenings.

The D.A. was under the chairmanship of Joe Piggott from 1966 until 1968. This was a period of slow growth, the average attendance at D.A. meets being about twenty units. Many questions were asked, and suggestions put forward to increase the turn out, and members were repeatedly being asked to co-operate in welcoming any newcomers.

The problem however was basic, stemming mainly from the fact that at this time the committee were mainly business people, and rarely on site before tea time on Saturday. This coupled with the fact that stewarding was done entirely by the committee meant that in most cases signs were not put up until late, thus making finding sites difficult to new members, and on arrival there was no one on hand to advise, and welcome them.

Unfortunately this was also a period of difficulties in committee. During this time the committee consisted of fourteen members plus officials, and it appears that all volunteers were accepted for committee work.

The foot and mouth epidemic of 1968 did not seriously affect the camping season, and it was in this year that the D.A. held its Midsummer Meet at Chelford in conjunction with "Campers Week". Mr. Lomas, M.P. for Huddersfield was invited to open this meet, and the general public were invited to attend, either as campers, or spectators. Two hundred suppers were catered for, and the meet was a highly successful one. The D.A. organised the Regional Meet of this year also at Chelford.

Joe Piggott went to the Region as chairman in 1968, and at the D.A. A.G.M. that year Harold Brown was elected chairman, Maurice Green elected secretary, and Norman Pickles re-elected treasurer, together with twelve committee members.

This 1968/69 period was a dark one for the D.A. with trouble in committee, and rumours and denials that the D.A. might fold up, and culminating in a near mass resignation of the committee.

At the 1969 A.G.M. held at Chelford, the atmosphere was tense and expectant. The vice-chairman, Syd Clarke, took the chair and in his opening remarks stressed that committee members should be prepared to take a full share in the running of a successful D.A.. At this meeting the Model Constitution was adopted and the officers elected were, Chairman, Syd. Clarke; secretary, Wyn. Clarke. treasurer, Norman Pickles re-elected, and nine committee members.

From this point onwards it can truthfully be said that the fortunes of the D.A. took an upward swing. There was harmony in committee, and the winter programme of that period saw a greater emphasis on social activities. The D.A. made its own amplifying equipment at reasonable cost thanks to the efforts of a committee member.

A D.A. newsletter was started in May 1970 with thirty seven subscribers, and ended the year with one hundred and nine.

At the 1970 A.G.M. it was agreed that the committee consist of nine members, plus a Youth Leader, plus officials. It was agreed that this was a good working number. The Chairman remarked on a good year in committee, improved D.A. spirit, and stewarding, with an average attendance of twenty six units at camping meets.

It must be noted here that during this time the nucleus of a thriving Youth Section was being formed, due to the dedication of the Youth Leader John Lovatt.

The season until the 1971 A.G.M. was a tremendous one for NECDA (as we now called ourselves), the average attendance at meets reached thirty six units, and many compliments were being paid to the D.A. by visitors to our various activities.

Norman Pickles resigned as treasurer at the 1971 A.G.M. a post he had held since 1965. Norman had a hand in the fortunes of the D.A. from the beginning, and a record of service to the D.A. second to none. In fact in terms of service Norman can be said to be our grand old man.

It was agreed to discontinue the Social Box, and apply a levy of 5p per camping unit at camping meets, to be collected by the steward.

NECDA continued to thrive, notably the Youth Section, which was now under the guidance of Terry Brinay. They were camping separately at meets and having much success in passing the C.C.Y. tests.

Of note too was the fuller winter programme members enjoyed and the start of an Annual Buffet Dance (now a Dinner Dance). At this time too a Swimming Section had been formed, and enjoyed by swimmers and non-swimmers alike, and all ages.

One of the main reasons for the rapid growth of NECDA was the policy of the chairman and committee to get as many members as possible involved in the running of the D.A.. This was particularly evident at meets, where members were now doing stewarding duties, and getting much pleasure from it.

The 1972 A.G.M. saw Barry Vernon assume the Chairmanship, with Gordon Howkins elected secretary, and Harold Heap re-elected treasurer.

The policy of participation was continued, and a still greater emphasis placed on a full winter programme of social activities.

The introduction of Country Dance workshops got off the ground, and the Slide Show evenings were made more interesting by entry into the Club National Competition field. Here much to the delight of our photographers NECDA won the National Trophy in 1973.

The fortnightly walks were ever popular, and the Socials for all ages continued to be the season's high lights.

Our first venture into the Holiday Meet arena in 1973, was taken with some trepidation, but thanks to the enthusiasm, and hard work of a sub-committee, led by the chairman, plus some invaluable help from members, this venture proved highly successful, both financially, and as a public relations exercise.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

So after ten years NECDA has become firmly established as a thriving and popular entity within the Region and the Camping Club.

Those of us who enjoy the good times, and fellowship today would do well to pause sometimes and remember the hours of voluntary labour, put in by a few dedicated people to make it all possible. Luckily by the nature of things there will always be people who are willing to take up this burden for the benefit of the D.A. and the Club.

Above all else, we must not let our standard of camping fall. The few rules we have must be obeyed, and strictly enforced.

At this moment in time NECDA is a happy friendly D.A. with intimate camping meets, at which no one should feel unwelcome or unwanted, and many varied social activities which cater for all ages.

No one can foretell the future, but with the present membership so full of enthusiasm, and willingness to help, those of you who have watched the D.A. grow from a troublesome start, to the lively thriving unit it is today, can look forward with optimism.

Barry Vernon
Chairman.

