

The Scottish Scouts Wore Kilts



This picture is worth a thousand words.

Obviously, it depicts a scout master leading a troop of boy scouts on parade.

Here is the story behind the picture.

It is a summer day in Dundas, Ontario, in the year 1954, just nine years after WWII. Dundas was recognized for its many parades along King Street, its main thoroughfare and this is one of them.

Our scout master is Mr. Ed Waller. He wore a Charley Chaplin style mustache, but that is where the similarity ended. He was a stern but loving leader, who took pride in his leadership of us scouts. He was instrumental in organizing church members of Knox Presbyterian Church to acquire kilts for the troop. Knox had many Scottish members, who were a friendly, generous and supportive group of adults who shared in Mr. Ed Waller's dream to have us dressed in kilts.

Our visionary scout master organized us boys to take on odd jobs, such as cleaning people's yards, to raise money and also work toward another scout badge. He encouraged us to get lots of badges which our mothers would then sew prominently onto our shirts. We learned to tie knots, track trails, cook, sew, and thus work our way toward becoming a First Class Scout.

At first we wore our bathing suits under the kilts, but eventually we settled for plain underwear. It is hilarious to think back on now, sixty years later, how we'd horse around not having the skills of modesty that girls had learned from years of wearing skirts and dresses.

Now back to the picture of 1954. The row to the right portrays five young and handsome scouts, who were not only taught to walk in step but to also how to get back in step again with a quick skip. The first scout is John Raué, my younger brother, a dedicated scout, he was soon to turn twelve years old. Behind him is Tom Hickey, who later followed his father's footsteps and became a lawyer (the white stripes on his chest shows that he was a patrol leader). Next is Jim Hawkins, who was a fine athlete. Following him is me, Harry Raué. It's interesting that I am looking sideways toward Mustard's Billiards Hall.

It was there, five years later, that Mr. Mustard kicked me out of this very own Billiard Hall. It was January 25, 1959, my birthday. You had to be eighteen to be able to play billiards. Well I was eighteen that day. After I entered the hall, a young man asked me to join him in a game. I somehow beat him. He then said that we should bet some money on the next game. That is when Mr. Mustard called me aside and asked me for proof that I was eighteen years old. I did not have any identification to show him, but I figured that my word was all that was required. Well, Mr. Mustard asked me to leave his Billiard Hall upon this first day of my eighteenth year. I quietly suffered the humiliation and told no-one about it.

Now, figure this, many years later I recounted this tale. It was not until then that it dawned upon me. I slapped the palm of my right hand with a glance along the front of my forehead. Mr. Mustard had rescued me from being taken in by one of his regulars who was a pool shark. Now that showed character. Thanks Mr. Mustard.

Now back to the picture. Behind me is Doug Waller, our scout master's son. I liked him. He was boisterous, friendly and had a good sense of humour. Our scout master taught us to walk in step with him. Should we fall out of step, he taught us to get back in step with a quick skip. Mr. Waller walks proud and tall sporting his troop behind him with their kilts swaying from side to side in unison. Now here is some humour. We're all in step except, who else, our scout master's son Doug and he's not even aware by the look on his face that he is the only one out-of-step. He has one white bar on his chest, which shows that he is a seconder of his patrol.

The scout, leading the far side, is John Flynn. His mother, who had the foresight which he lacked at the time, made him take piano lessons. Behind him is Ian Wylie, wearing glasses and freckles. He was a new immigrant from Ireland. He had one of the best mothers any boy could ask for. However, his Dad had trouble finding a good job and both he and his mother became homesick for Ireland. They returned back to Northern Ireland and we never saw them again. The other boys I remember but have forgotten their names. Sorry guys.

Our membership grew. No wonder after such an impressive march in kilts.

Tom and Doug were already patrol leaders, thus they wore two white stripes on their shirts. I was seconder on Doug's patrol. But a new patrol was soon formed. It was called the "Wild Goose Patrol" and I became its leader.

Our Scout Master decided that we should earn our scouting badge. He planned it well. We gathered at the Armories on Market Street. There he left us to follow the clues that he left along the way, which would then lead us to his camp. There we were to camp for the day, cook our meals and tell stories around the fire. Upon his departure he gave us one clue, the general direction to take and the location of the first clue, and then from there we were to read the signs he left us and thus scout our way to his camp.

