

THE FIFE D.A. OF THE C. T. C.

Walter L. Browne

I suppose I was more intimately concerned in the founding of the Fife D.A. than anyone else, so I suppose it is fitting that I should attempt to tell, in this year of its Golden Jubilee, something of its early history.

1916 — I shall have to digress a little. I joined the C.T.C. in May 1916 and was speedily contacted by the Secretary of the Birmingham D.A. who lived only a few yards away. I was made welcome and supported their activities to such an extent that I was elected to their committee and was for a time Secretary.

1919 — I came up to Scotland in March, 1919 and got in touch with the Lothians and Peebles D.A. as it was then known, only to find that they were almost moribund. However, I supported them as far as possible and received considerable encouragement from Edward Zoller, and with some additional support managed to get some activity. I was elected as Acting Secretary which raised a problem as I was living outwith the D.A. area and thus officially not one of their members at all. I suggested that this could be overcome by extending the area of the L & P.D.A. area to include Fife, which was duly done. Meanwhile I had not been inactive in Fife and we were beginning to get a following in the 'Kingdom' sufficiently so to warrant the establishment of the Fife Section of the L.&P.D.A.

1920 —

- May 8 — Date of our first Runs Book. Falkland. James Todd, W.L. Browne.
Thereafter fortnightly runs were held, the alternate Saturdays being devoted to the L. & P.D.A.'s runs.
- July 17 — J.W. Williams. A. Williams, Glasgow.
- Sept. 18 — Stirling, with Glasgow D.A., Henry Reid and W. Brown, Dunfermline, J. Todd and W.L.B.
- Oct. 16 — Culross. 6 attended — Henry Reid, E. Pride, Wm. Brown Senr., Wm. Brown Junr., J. Todd and W.L.B.
- Oct. 30 — Falkland. G. Craig, Kirkcaldy appeared, so we were progressing. Henry Reid was a linen manufacturer, Wm. Brown Senr. a master joiner and his son, a joiner, G. Craig, an art master, J. Todd, assistant chemist in the Aluminium Company laboratory, E. Pride, a cycling companion of Mr. Brown.
Next the Robertson family joined in, and on
- Sept.10/19 appears the name of S.A. Robertson.
- Sept.17/18 we made history so far as I know, with the first organised 24 hour run in Scotland. It was not intended as a speed or endurance test — just a rather longer ride than usual. A schedule was drawn up, and a full description and schedule appeared in the Scotsman Motoring and Cycling(!) Notes.
Route:- Burntisland — Milnathort (16¾ miles) Tea at Thistle — Newport (48¼)

8.40 boat to Dundee – met here by Dundee Road Club and friends; Arbroath – Montrose (72¾) – supper at Brechin; Forfar, Glamis (99½) early breakfast in Grey's tearoom, Perth. Bein Inn (132) – drinks – Burntisland (156).
Attended: Miss D.A. Robertson and Struan, Kirkcaldy, W.W. Page, J. Todd, W.L.B.

1921

- Nov. 19** – D.N. Todd, brother of J. Todd. (late because 'first time out').
Nov. 26 – H.E. Tong, Rosyth member who worked at the Dockyard arranged a visit there. It was very successful, eleven attended. We felt we were getting somewhere.
Dec. 10 – Dunfermline. Miss E.A. Robertson, R. Templeman appeared for first time. 10 attended.
Dec. 24 – Kirkcaldy: Kate Dryburgh, Diana McKenzie (sister of Kate) and S. Lunan, Dunfermline, attended for the first time.
Dec. 31 – being a Saturday, a New Year's Eve Run was suggested to Perth, Supper at Bridge of Earn, leave Perth midnight, breakfast (picnic) Falkland 3 a.m.
Present: D.A. and S.A. Robertson, D.N. and Jas. Todd, W.L.B.

1922

- Mar. 4** – Our first Social at Rossend Castle, Burntisland. 27 attended.
Mar. 18 – Falkland. 22 members. Miss Rodger and Miss Dand out for first time. Runs were now held every week.

An outstanding event early April was the holding of a lecture by 'Wayfarer'. Wayfarer was the pen name of W.M. Robinson who wrote regularly in 'Cycling' articles which must have encouraged many recruits to the pastime. He was to give a talk in Newcastle on Dec. 3, 1921. As there was already a suggestion that he should be invited to Edinburgh and Glasgow, Edward Zoller and I thought we might go down to Newcastle to hear him and see what his talk was like – which we duly did. ('Training' to Lauder Sat. morning early, riding to Newcastle, attending the lecture – where we got special mention – staying overnight in Newcastle, train to Carlisle on Sunday and riding home the rest of the way.) We came back quite determined to go ahead. The hall in Edinburgh was far too small, the platform was full of squatters! We had Jock Millar from Larkhall, strong support from the Fife Section, and many from Dundee. Several went home by Stirling.

- Apr. 22** – A Social evening in Dunfermline had an attendance of 40.
Apr. 29 – An Inter D.A. meet with L. & P.D.A. at Culross, 12 attended.

It was getting fairly obvious that the Fife Section was becoming sufficiently strong to consider the formation of an independent D.A., and signatures were collected to a requisition to the C.T.C. Council to give effect to this; but as we were part of the Lothians area it was necessary to have a special meeting of the Lothians D.A. to get their consent to hiving off a portion of their territory, which was, of course, readily granted. The formation was approved at the July Council Meeting 1922.

- June** — About this time or earlier, Wm. Brown, Senr., Dunfermline offered the use of a hut as a weekend hut. A site was duly found at Myrehaugh on waste ground belonging to Mrs. Johnman of Myrehaugh Farm. It was opened on June 3, 1922. The run was to Pitkethly Wells and Mr. Brown announced the erection of the hut. So — Willie Brown Junr., S. Lunan and W.L.B. must needs occupy it. While I went down to Burntisland for food, blankets, etc. Sandy Lunan collected candles, etc. I got back to find the skull of a ram with horns, suspended on the door — a fine door knocker! People who have used the hut since will know what I mean when I say It was rather cold!
- June 10/11** Our second 24. Bridge of Earn, Dunning, Dunblane, Stirling, Doune, Callander, Strathyre, Balquhidder, Kingshouse, Callander, Thornhill, Kippen, Arnprior, Stirling, Burntisland — 157 miles. 3 from Fife and 4 from Edinburgh attended.
- June 17** — Glenvale Picnic. 27 attended.
- July** — C.T.C. visited Germany. See separate article.

It was necessary to hold the inaugural general meeting within three months of the Council's sanction, and this was held in Dunfermline, following a run to Culross on Oct. 7, 1922. Provost A.D. Sloan, C.T.C. member of St. Andrews was elected president, with Rev. R.A. Agnew, Clackmannan and Mr. Henderson, Leslie, as vice-presidents. Mr. Wm. Brown was Section Chairman and myself Secretary. These officials were suggested to cover the area as widely as possible, the area of the D.A. being Fife, Clackmannan and Kinross. Later a part of Perthshire was added.

This gives some idea, I hope, of the events leading up to the founding of the Fife D.A.