

HERITAGE THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH OF December 2020.

Due to Coronavirus as expected, many Scouting activities during the Christmas break were cancelled. Up to last year I arranged for my County Heritage Team and invited guests to lunch at the *Mops and Brooms PH*. Prior to lunch we assembled in the County Heritage Centre at Well End.

I regret to report the “Going Home” of Terry Dowding who has died this month. **Terry** was a DC of Potters Bar, 2000 – 2005 and led the District during difficult times with the support of many of his Scouting colleagues. **Terry** was an expert in carpentry & joinery and had a hobby building and maintaining quad bikes that members of the District were allowed to use. He was also invited to help on a number of Adult Leader Training Courses as a Tutor and a Specialist presenter. He started his Leader activities as an ASL in 1965 and had a number of roles in the District. He gained several merit awards including the Silver Acorn and the Chief Scouts 40 – year service award.



This month, Bear Grylls the Chief Scout had a slot on *BBC 1 Breakfast* to explain in detail how *Coronavirus* was affecting Scouting and its finances. **Bear** has also appeared in a number of newspaper and TV articles during the month. This included a recent article asking for former or currently active Scouts to volunteer for 12 hours a month by applying to nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk.

The Duchess of Cambridge a National Scout Ambassador, appeared in the press in uniform during a visit to Gilwell Park, to explain her role in “early year’s development” and ask for it to be treated “on a par with other great social changes of our time”.

Those of you addicted to *Mastermind* on TV will have seen **Stephen Bell** a Microbiologist Research Fellow, answering questions on *Scouting*. This is not the first time questions have been answered on this or related subjects i.e. *Baden-Powell*, *Lady B-P*, *Mafeking* etc. Out of 11 questions he only managed 5 correct with 4 passes and 2 incorrect. The questions he answered incorrectly were – **Q 1** - The first ever Scout Camp was held over 8 days on an Island in Poole Harbour in August 1907. Which Island? **Comment:** *The 1907 camp on Brownsea Island was not a Scout Camp but an Experimental Camp. It was organised by B-P to try out the ideas in his book Scouting for Boys. No Scouts were present as they had not then been invented and the Scout Law and Oath had not yet been written. (The Oath was changed to The Promise in 1912).* **Q 5** – **B-P** was inspired to set up the Scout Movement by a Scout Troop formed during the Siege of Mafeking and by an Army Officer who was the son of a Prime Minister. What was his name? **Comment:** *There was no Scout Troop in Mafeking in 1900 for the same reasons given above. Lord Edward Cecil was Chief of Staff. He did not form the Mafeking Cadets as they existed before B-P arrived at the conflict. During the siege the Cadets were supervised by Lt. Ronnie Moncrieffe who spent the latter half of the siege locked up in the Town Goal for drunkenness. (I am grateful for the expertise of a member of my team, Colin Walker who has studied and written extensively about the siege). Some of the Mastermind questions were clearly not properly researched.*

Hertfordshire County Scout Council

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County Commissioner: **Liz Walker**

County President: **Robert Voss CBE**

County Chairman: **Michael Shurety**

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The death of an outstanding mountaineer, former Scout and the first Englishman to ascend the south-west face of Mount Everest, **Doug Scott** was announced during the month. His obituary made gripping reading. **Doug** was always proud to proclaim that his first introduction to climbing was through Scouting at the age of 13. This was at Black Rocks, Derbyshire where he used his mother's washing line for a climbing rope! Our former **ACC (Mountaineering) Terry Winch** was a great fan and met him at conferences where **Doug** had been speaking.

Colin Skuse the County Paddle Sports Manager, has sent me a handsome shield that was presented for "best Troop performance" at the County Canoe Slalom. This covers the period 1980 – 1992. **Mike Tullberg**, who has a number of roles in St Albans District, elaborated that the competition during this period was held next to the Aqua dome in Rickmansworth and at Dobbs Weir at Broxbourne.

Through the 112 years of Scouting in Hertfordshire there have been several significant events held on or close to Christmas Day. Perhaps the most recent is when the County completed the purchase of Lochearnhead Scout Station on Christmas Day 1977. To mark the event this photo was taken later in the year by **Fred North ACC (Public Relations)**. It was published in the County Newsletter *Hertfordshire Scout News* and the *Annual Review*. Following the acquisition, some months of renovations by a dedicated team of Leaders who made the long journey to Scotland most weekends. They were led and organised by **John and May Bennett**. During the past 40 + years many further renovations have taken place. Most recently thanks to extensive fund raising by **Roger Sands**.

The latest revelations regarding the Lockerbie plane disaster on 21 December 1988 reminded me that a Hertfordshire Scout, **Tim Burman** aged 23 of the Harpenden Venture Scout Unit died in this crash. He had been travelling to New York on board Flight 103 to become engaged to his girlfriend. The Harpenden Venture Scout Unit gave a trophy in his memory, - *The Burman Trophy*. This was dedicated to a County Competition, *Herts Euro Navigation* that ran for several years. A letter in his memory was sent to the County Newspaper, *The Herts Advertiser*.



Barnet Scout District played a significant role in Hertfordshire Scouting until 1965. I have recently accepted the *Log Book* of the Second Barnet Rover Crew. This will join other *Rover Crew Logbooks* in the Heritage Centre at Well End. I was donated two books. The first, bound in green leather, is embossed in gold leaf and covers the period 4 April 1935 - 3 September 1939. (The day WW2 broke out). On its final written page, complete with a "Gone Home" sign, the book describes where each member of the Rover Crew had been allocated to a post during wartime. The entry closes with the words "No future plans for the Crew have been made yet". In a separate rather inferior exercise book but for the Boy Scout Troop and covering the period from 1 January 1942 – 8 August 1942. This recorded in some detail the workings of the Troop at the height of the war.

It should be of interest that a member of this Second Barnet Rover Crew was **Graham Wallis JP**. He served as a Major during WW1 and joined the Scout Movement late in life in 1932 at the age of 47.

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He became County Commissioner (CC) of Hertfordshire 1944 – 1956. This was at a most difficult time in the history of Hertfordshire Scouting. He was also for many years a member of the Committee of the Council at Scout HQ, 25 Buckingham Palace Road, London. As CC for Hertfordshire, he became very popular amongst young people. One was always aware he was sincere in his work and he attended many of the County Patrol Leader Training and Badge Courses that were held at Well End. This was the County Training Ground HQ he had personally financed in 1933. He made a point of shaking each boy by the hand (including my own) and always spoke a few words to each of personal encouragement as well as addressing the Conference in plenary.



<<<<<<<< **(GW)** is seen here at the opening of the new **Graham Wallis HQ** at the Well End Training Centre in 1964. This was during the time I was County Quartermaster (1960-1967) and **Freddy O’Hare** (now a member of my Team) was Deputy Camp Warden. The CC at the time was **Melville Balsillie** but he was too ill to attend having suffered a head injury at a massed County event. The timber building was originally named the *Training Hut* and was financed personally by **GW** in 1933 following the acquisition of the site by **Sir Percy Everett** the same year. In the 1950/60s, winters were far more severe and it was necessary to unfreeze the water pipes. This was how the Hut was destroyed by fire on 19 January 1963. **“GW”** died in on Easter Sunday 1969 aged 84. His Memorial Service was attended by his many friends and colleagues and was held at his local church, St Mary’s, Monken Hadley, Hertfordshire, on 25 April 1969.

Colin Walker, is a member of my Heritage Team. He is also a Fellow Rover Scout and world renowned Scout Author & Historian in his own right. For some years now he has been working on a project to trace and publish a book that will detail the history of the 3000+ former (and current) Rover Crews up to their abolition in 1967 or activation since then. Naturally, Hertfordshire being the first Scout County in the World will feature. His plan is to publish the Crews in County order. There is confident speculation that Rover Scouting will eventually make a return as a Section to replace one that already exists.

I have sent my thanks and best wishes to **Tim Kidd** and **Ann Limb** for their work and interest in Hertfordshire during the time of their respective appointments as Chief Commissioner and Chair of the Board of Trustees. I have welcomed those to be appointed from next September, **Carl Hankinson** and **Jennie Price** and wish them well in their important new roles.

Frank Brittain

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