

HERITAGE THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2021

As promised, I include a brief report on my visit to the Isle of Wight last month.

As reported previously, the Island has many connections to Hertfordshire Scouting. At least one former DC and ACC was born there, went to school and attended the First Newport Scout Group before his parents moved to Hertfordshire.

A former Hertfordshire County Scout Vice President, previous DC of Mid Herts District 1919-1934 and High Sherriff of the County had a holiday home at Seaview for many years. He was **Sir William Acland MC, AFC, TD**. I have tracked down and met his descendants at their home in Freshwater. **Sir William** died in 1970 in Bulls Green at the Datchworth home of his daughter **Miss Mollie**. His memorial service was held in St Peter's Church, Seaview, but his remains are buried at Datchworth, Hertfordshire. This followed his cremation at Golders Green. **Sir William** has a buoy named after him near St Helen's Fort, I.O.W.

A former Chief Scout who became **Lord Somers** was also born at Freshwater. He was born at a house named *The Briary*. During my visit in 2016 the current owners allowed me to take a tour of the Garden and take photographs. He later moved to the family estate Eastnor Castle in Shropshire. I have had several chats with the Castle Archivist but Covid intervened and I have not yet made a visit.

A good friend and former Island Historian **Elizabeth Hutchins** died in 2020. We had met and taken her on trips for several years during our visits. She was a very knowledgeable and active lady having served on The Needles Battery as a volunteer in WW2.

We met with **Imogen Baden-Powell** and **Lady Sally Grylls** for lunch on Wednesday. We spent some time catching up with gossip and old times. While I was there I had an unexpected telephone call from **Bear Grylls** to thank me for the Heritage Work I do in Hertfordshire and he remembered with affection, his visit to Hertfordshire

On our way home, we called in at *The Goose Bookshop* in St Helens to purchase a book *Sea Scouts up-Channel*. One of a series of 17 books (many on Scouting) and written by **Percy Westerman** following WW1. We have several of these titles in the County Scout Library at Well End.

An interesting and newsworthy Obituary appeared in *The Daily Telegraph* on 15 September. It was for **Margaret Purves, GC**. At the age of 14, she was the last person to be awarded the Albert Medal, (converted to the George Cross in 1949). It was awarded following her rescue of two Boy Scouts from drowning in Wales. They had been cut off from the rest of their party by an incoming sea. **Margaret** was visiting Sully Island near Barry when she observed the Scouts get into difficulty and in spite of exceptionally cold water, she swam across the Bay to their rescue. It is almost certain that Margaret also saved the life of their Leader **Tony Rees** who had also tried to help the boys.

Heritage Scouting in Hertfordshire has been busy this month.

Frank Brittain

Hertfordshire Scouts Archivist and Historian

archivist@hertfordshirescouts.org.uk

Hertfordshire County Scout Council

County Headquarters: Well End Activity Centre, Well End Road, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire WD6 5PR

Tel: 020 8236 0040

e-mail: info@hertfordshirescouts.org.uk

www.hertfordshirescouts.org.uk

County Commissioner: **Liz Walker**

County President: **Robert Voss CBE**

County Chairman: **Michael Shurety**

Charity No: 302606

Scottish Charity No: 39650

VAT registration No: 761 4558 19