

## HERITAGE THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE 2021

I am sorry to report the "Going Home" last month of **John Veysey** at the age of 91. He lost his wife **Sheila** on 4 March and was able to attend her funeral. His daughter **Elaine** has passed on the news. **The Veysey family** were all active members of the **First Croxley Green Scout Group**.



Some of you may remember **John Hewitt** who was an active member of the 3rd Cockfosters and 2nd Totteridge Scout Groups and of the **Barnet District Rover Crew**, at that time a District of Hertfordshire Scouting. He was a valued assistant following my appointment in 1957 to the County Team as County Quartermaster for 10 years and took over this role in 1967. A skilled and qualified mountaineer, ice climber and sailor he was involved with Training Courses at

Lochearnhead and at Well End. He was also a Course Leader on the County Expedition to the Lofoten Islands. He died in 2007 at the age of 69. Most of his life he lived in Belmont Avenue, Cockfosters, and in 1997 after his parents died he moved to Brightlingsea in Essex to have better access to the sea in order to sail his two boats. He became a respected pillar of his local Community and held appointments as chairman or Secretary of a number of kindred organisations. He was soon to be installed as Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge there. I was able to attend his funeral, meet with his family as well as a number of his fellow Lodge Members. At that time the family returned to me a number of artefacts that he had saved from the disastrous fire at Well End during his time on the Service Team.

The recent TV documentary about the early life of **HM Elizabeth the Queen Mother** was indeed riveting viewing. Born a Hertfordshire Lady, **Elizabeth Bowes Lyon** soon became a prominent figure in the County. I never had the opportunity to meet **HM** but as a teenager and young Leader I did meet her brother **Sir David Bowes Lyon** on a number of occasions when he was Lord Lieutenant for Hertfordshire 1952-1961 and when he visited Well End Activity Centre as County Scout President. He was replaced by another former military hero, **Major General Sir George Burns** who served 1961-1986. **HM The Queen Mother** was born in 1900, just before Scouting was introduced to the world.

In 1926, following discussions with the Kent County Secretary, Hertfordshire set up its own rules and organisation for a County Cycle Marathon. The sealed rules and route were sent to DCs to be issued to applicants. Teams were advised to start anywhere on the route and should plan to cover at least 40 miles with the ride and to cover a period of at least 24 hrs. This ensured an overnight camp and all equipment had to be carried by bicycle. A Log Book had to be written. This first marathon finished at Burloes Hall, Royston with the kind permission of **Sir Cecil Newman**. The judges were **D.Francis Morgan (ACC Training)**, **Percy Everett (CC)**, **Sir Cecil Neumann**, **Mr E.P.Greenwood (County Secretary designate)** and **Charles Fisher (County Secretary)**.



### Hertfordshire County Scout Council

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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



In 1937, the fifth World Jamboree took place at Vogelenzang, Holland. It was the last World Jamboree attended by **B-P** as he died later on 8 January 1941 at the age of 84. Hertfordshire sent a contingent of 60 from 12 Districts. This was led by the DC of Barnet Potters Bar & District, **Graham Wallis**. I was fortunate to track down and interview **Clifford Fearn** in 2005 from the 9th St Albans and **Bill Allen** in 2007 from 1st Waltham Cross who had both attended this 1937 Jamboree. **Anthony Brett-James** from Elstree District also attended and he found the experience so profound that he wrote a book about his time there. When he died in 1984 aged only 63 he left £500 in his will to help deserving Scouts in the District.



Following 1937, the next World Jamboree (and the first following WW2) was held in 1947 at Moisson on the banks of the River Seine in France. Following this Jamboree, the Contingent Leader, **Dr Leslie Pears** who became DC of Rickmansworth District, invited **Ronald Maddox** who was his Contingent Troop Leader, to speak of his experiences at the annual County Scouters Conference at Harpenden on 12 October. **Ronald** who lived at Old Welwyn, became an accomplished Artist and painter in watercolours. I met with him several times before his death in 1984. He was most helpful in providing artwork for a number of my exhibitions as seen here at the County AGM in 2007.



H. M. THE QUEEN LEAVING BADEN-POWELL HOUSE, JULY 12th 1961

The formal opening of Baden-Powell House in Knightsbridge was by **HM The Queen** on 12 July 1961. Just prior to the opening a bronze statue of **B-P** was unveiled by the National President, **HRH The Duke of Gloucester**. Her Majesty was greeted by **Chief Scout Lord Maclean** who then presented **Lady Baden-Powell (the World Chief Guide)** and other VIPs. The Bishop of St Albans, **Rt Rev Michael Gresford-Jones** led prayers, and the whole event was televised with **Richard Dimbleby** as commentator. Scouts from Hertfordshire were on duty. They included **David Rolfe** and **Michael Camp** from Bishops Stortford District, **Chris Flemming** from the 3rd Letchworth Group and **Michael Somerville** from the 6th Stevenage Scout Group.

Scout Groups from Hertfordshire contributed generously to the **B-P Memorial Fund** and a number became "Founder Groups" like the 1st Rickmansworth. A dormitory room was named "The Hertfordshire Room" for over 30 years, until refurbishment in 1991, when all historic nameplates were removed and disposed of, much to the dismay of the many Counties, Groups and individuals who had given so generously since 1941. **Reg Flower** was the resident Warden who I visited at his home in Hertfordshire, provided me with much information.

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It was with great sadness to learn on **25 June 1977** of the death of the World Chief Guide, **Lady Olave Baden-Powell GBE**. Her hardback biography *Olave Baden-Powell* makes fascinating reading.

This was written by **Eileen Wade**, who was her Secretary and until her death, was previously Secretary to **B-P**. An autobiography *Window on my Heart* in paperback was written by **Mary Drewery**. **Olave's** former home Gray Rigg is in Poole. This large house has now been surrounded by other properties since she



lived there with her parents and before her marriage to **B-P** at Poole Church. When **Olave** lived there, the house had a view of Brownsea Island. A small memorial can be found at the end of her road on the shoreline of the Harbour and a memorial display marking their wedding can also be seen in the Church. More recently I had a letter published in *The Daily Telegraph* in response to an article about **HM The Queen** being "The most travelled Monarch." In a supporting follow-up, I explained that during the 39 years that **Lady Olave** was World Chief Guide she travelled the World extensively, logging 550,632 miles incurring 648 flights. Even at the age of 76 she made 42 flights in one year. In addition, **Olave** also travelled frequently by sea with husband, **Lord Robert Baden-Powell**. This earned her the reputation as "The most travelled woman in the world."

This month the County newspaper *The Herts Advertiser* carried a two-page article about the retirement of a St Albans Tailor **Geoffrey Golding**. He has supplied my hand-made 3-piece suits for the past 40 years. I discovered a Scouting connection early on when I asked him to make me a uniform Scout suite (trousers and matching jacket from the official material), when I became a member of the County Training Team in 1967. I copied the idea from the staff at Gilwell Park as I was impressed by their smartness. **Geoffrey** arrived in the UK with his father from Russia during WW2 and as soon as his age permitted, joined one of the most famous Groups in Hertfordshire, the 4th St Albans Scout Group. **Geoffrey** was soon recognised by the Royal Family and eventually held six Royal Warrants, each to a different member of the Household for the supply of dress and civil uniforms.

The national remembrance to open the magnificent new memorial in France to the men and women who fell during the British D-Day Landings 77 years ago were repeated at Alrewas, the National Arboretum in Warwickshire on 6 June. These memorials are well worth a visit with a Group, family or as an individual. There are also several individual and Group Scout memorials to be found although there are more Guide memorials than Scout. Every tree is numbered and the site is too large and interesting to explore properly in one visit.

### **Frank Brittain**

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