

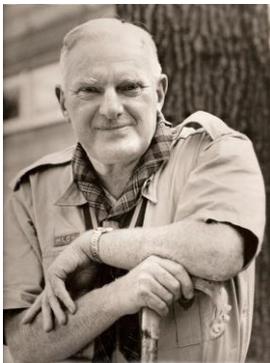
HERITAGE THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY (April 2017)

Sixty years ago, April 1957 was a momentous month for Hertfordshire Scouting.

John Rainbow (19) of the First Hitchin (Grammar School) Troop was presented with the Silver Cross for Gallantry. John was visiting the Bristol Channel with an RAF colleague (Jim) who slipped and fell into the rising tidal bore between some rocks and was quickly swept out to sea. John immediately jumped into the roaring waters and got hold of Jim who was struggling to keep afloat, where John was pulled under several times. Eventually they both lost consciousness. After a short while, John surfaced and becoming revived he searched for a while but was unable to find his friend who had sunk and drowned. John then faced a long and difficult swim back to the shore.



The award of the Silver Cross is a rare event. There have been only 19 presentations since 1911. The last was to **Damien Coles** of the Fifth Stevenage (Air Scout) Troop in 2009.



1957 was also the Jubilee of Scouting and **Melville Balsillie** ACC (Senior Scouts) announced that he had been invited to write another book about Senior Scouts (the 15-18 year-old Section at that time). He advised there was to be a print run of 5000 and the considerable royalties would be channelled into the development of Senior Scouting in Hertfordshire. Melville had come to the county in 1950 with a considerable reputation. In his first public address to the County he stated "I am coming to Hertfordshire to make things happen". His dynamic professional approach to his work, and articulate convincing orations, meant that his many projects and initiatives were carried forward to fruition without delays, sometimes in the face of strong opposition. He often joked about his birthdate of 1 April. He died in 1973. Nearly 1000 people attended his memorial service in St Albans Cathedral. Tributes were spoken by **George Moody** ACC (GD) who lived on the Isle of Lewis and Tony Burgess CC.



For the first time, three world Scout events were held in the UK. J.I.M. (Jamboree - Indaba - Moot) at Sutton Coldfield Warwickshire. The Park has a circumference of 10 miles and by April 1957, it had taken 10 years of work to clear the scrub and bushes to convert Sutton Park into three sites. By this time, Hertfordshire had selected its young participants for the Jamboree, the Adults at the Indaba, and Rover Scouts for the Moot. Hertfordshire was very well represented at each event. It was the last WSJ when camping took place in Patrol Tents with traditional cooking in kitchens. The photo shows the revolving globe that was at the very centre of the Park. In 1958 an obelisk was placed here to mark the event and 50 years later another plaque was placed on the obverse. This was to commemorate the centenary of the Movement and the planting of an avenue of 50 oak trees in the Park.

Fifty years later in 2007, a 3-day world reunion was held. Over 300 people who had been present at the 1957 Jamboree attended, from 27 countries. They lived at a university in Cambridge. The participants included many members of the Baden-Powell family. There were 5 people from Hertfordshire. We visited the original site, Gilwell Park and the WSJ at Chelmsford in Essex. At 8 a.m. on 1st August we renewed our Scout Promise as the sun rose on every country in the world.



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