

HERITAGE THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY (December 2016)

26th December 2016

For those of you who knew him -- **Ronald Arthur Freeman** *would have been 100 today!*

Ron was an exceptionally hard working Scouter in Barnet District who joined as an adult in 1934 with the Sixth East Barnet Rover Crew. He later became ADC(RS) from 1952 to 1964 ACC(RS) and then a County Divisional Commissioner and County Vice President until his death in 2005.

Rover Scouts were created during WW1. Their motto was *Service* and amongst other important roles they carried out in the public eye, was stewarding at the Hertfordshire County Show. They were the first to set up public blood donating sessions in Hertfordshire at Cockfosters Church House and due to there being many accidents on the local A1 roundabout, in 1937 and in co-operation with St John Ambulance, they set up a first aid post, roughly where the A1 and M25 junction is now.

Ron was selected as a member of the National Rover Panel and was a prime mover in fostering relationships between Rover Scouts and Ranger Guides in Hertfordshire. He was actively supported in this by his wife Joan. Several marriages developed out of this initiative.

In 1964 he was selected as Camp Chief of the South-East Counties Rover Moot.

He was also a life member of the British Naturalists Association and organised many well supported county rambles which stayed overnight in Scout HQs. He always held a ramble on his birthday, Boxing Day, and on his 80th, it terminated at Harmergreen Wood Campsite where he had been chairman for 8 years. Ron had camped at Harmergreen Wood with his Rover Scouts prior to and throughout WW2 and kept up a friendship with Sir William Acland. This assisted in its acquisition for Hertfordshire Scouting in 1969 when Sir William retired to the Isle of Wight.

The County Commissioner, Melville Balsillie appointed Ron a Divisional Commissioner (one of only four in the County and equivalent to a Deputy CC today). In this role in 1971/2 he oversaw the dissemination of the largest District in the County, (South West Herts) into the creation of three smaller Districts (since further reorganised).

Ron was awarded the Silver Wolf in 1970 and passed away on 18 January 2005 aged 88. The funeral and Service of Remembrance was held in All Saint's Church, Friern Barnet where he had worshiped most of his adult life and where many of his Rover Scouts completed their investiture ceremonies.

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