

HERITAGE THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY (February 2017)

23rd February 2017

The Oldest Scout in the World, **Sir Percy Everett (PWE)** died on 23 February 1952. He had been a staff member on Brownsea Island during the time **Robert Baden-Powell (B-P)** held his experimental Camp there in 1907. When the Camp finished, he asked **B-P** "What would you like me to do now?", **B-P** replied "Go back to Hertfordshire and get it organised as a Scout County.". It took PWE more than 12 months but by Christmas 1909 he had written to **B-P**, sending a map of our county, marked off into 16 defined Sub-Districts. Each had its president, secretary and executive committee. He advised that they were all hard at work selecting Scoutmasters to organize Troops in each District. **B-P** wrote of this achievement in *HQ Gazette*. "Where I have appointed County Commissioners, they should make note of this lead set by **Percy Everett** of Hertfordshire. Use what this county has done as a model to follow".

This is how Hertfordshire became the first Scout County in the World.

PWE became right hand man to **B-P** and was presented with a set of 6 graduated Wood Badge Beads to demonstrate his position and authority, (there are only two sets in the world. The other was worn by **B-P**). He founded the First Elstree Scout Troop and was County Commissioner of Hertfordshire for 36 years until 1944. **PWE** was knighted for his services to Scouting and Guiding in 1930, and was showered with awards from all over the world including the *Cross of the Redeemer* from Greece, which has been donated to Hertfordshire Scout Archives by his family.

Upon the death of **B-P** in 1941, **PWE** was appointed as Deputy to Chief Scouts **Lord Somers** and subsequently **Lord Rowallan**. **PWE**'s set of 6 graduated Wood Badge Beads was handed on to **John Thurman**, Camp Chief of Gilwell accompanied by a letter of provenance. The beads are now worn by **Ross Kemp** the Director of Scouting Operations at Gilwell Park.

When **PWE** died in 1952 his daughter, **Dr Winn Everett** (the first girl to take the Scout Oath in 1908), distributed his uniform items to Leaders in the First Elstree Scout Group. Most of these have now been donated to the Heritage Centre at Well End and a replica set of the 6 Wood Badge Beads is worn by "**George**" who is dressed in the uniform items.



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