

## HERITAGE THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH (August 2017)

While Hertfordshire gets into gear for the 24th World Scout Jamboree in West Virginia, I draw your attention to the anniversary of an historic event that occurred 60 years ago on 1 August 1957. For the first time, three World Scout events took place in the UK. J.I.M. (Jamboree, Indaba & Moot). These events were held in Warwickshire, at Sutton Coldfield Park. It was the last time traditional Scout camping with kitchens and Patrol Tents took place at a World Jamboree. The weather generally was atrocious, but **HM The Queen** attended, adding dignity and status to the occasion (it was her largest outdoor event since becoming Queen). The BBC were proud to announce it was also their largest outside broadcast to date and the full-time commentator was **Richard Dimbleby**. Scouts from Barnet, Potters Bar and District made up the Grandstand Team. Hertfordshire's **Mike Aston** was one of the staff on this Team, and many others who were present as participants or visitors, in different Sub Camps still meet today to reminisce about their experiences.



Hertfordshire sent participants to each event with the Jamboree having 5 Troops. These each had 29 young people and 3 Leaders each and the contingent was led by **Charles Brooks** from Hemel Hempstead. The Indaba (for Leaders only) had 34 (see photo) and was led by **Fred Cogar** from Letchworth and Baldock District. The Rover Moot was led by **Dave Jones** of Elstree with a contingent of 31. This totalled 213 from Hertfordshire. **Freddy O'Hare** and **myself** were members of what is now known as the International Support Team at the Rover Moot. A 50-year reunion was held in 2007. This 3-day world event attracted 300 people from 27 countries, including 5 from Hertfordshire.



Ten years earlier in 1947, a major County Camp and Rally was held at the invitation of the **Earl and Countess of Verulam** in Gorhambury Park, St Albans. The Rally included a rare visit by the Chief Scout **Lord Rowallan**. He took the trouble to meet with and shake the hand of every boy in the Jamboree Troop who were to leave for France later in the year. He was escorted by the Troop Leader **Ronald Maddox**, who was a Senior Scout from the First Welwyn Troop. Ronald is currently the Group President. Also during his visit, **Lord Rowallan** made a presentation of the Cornwall Scout Badge to **Graham Carson**. Graham had suffered from Muscular Dystrophy since he was 5 and joined the First Broxbourne Wolf Cubs at the age of 8. By this time, he was unable to walk and when he reached 12 the disease had spread to the rest of his body. Graham received the award at the age of 13 and died on 22 November 1952 aged 18. Graham was the third of only seven young people to receive this award in Hertfordshire. The last recipient was in 1995.



More recently on 17 August 2007, came the death of **Lord Deeds KBE, MC**, at the age of 94. He was a former editor of *The Daily Telegraph* and continued to write a daily column. In his final contribution (3 August 2007) he referred to a meeting he had at the age of 15 in 1928, with **Lord Baden-Powell**. The conversation he had with the Founder of Scouting had such an effect on the future **Lord Deeds** that this memory stayed with him until his dying day.

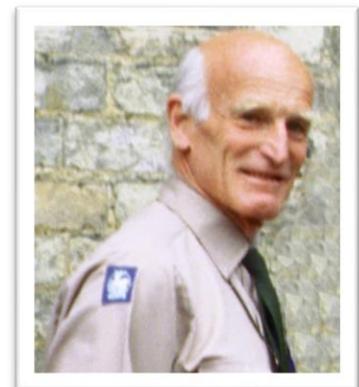
The sixth change of design to the County Scout badge in 98 years, resulted in an order for 5000 of the new badges to arrive at County Office on 5 August 2011. A number of alternative designs were proposed to the County Executive by the County Heritage Team including a different badge colour, the way the Hart faced, and the incorporation of a Scout arrowhead. All these were rejected in favour of a simple change of name from "Herts" to "Hertfordshire". It had taken several decades of campaigning to bring about this change of name. Although Hertfordshire was the first Scout County in the world, it did not have a badge until 1913. The County of Kent beat us and the rest of the UK to it!



In August 1954 **John Austin**, a Rover Scout with the Third Stevenage Crew, was on holiday with his parents in Penzance. He heard a call from a boat "there are children drowning". The mother of the children had waded into the sea to help as they were being swept into deeper water. John, a qualified life saver, swam out, taking one child at a time back to the shore returning finally to rescue the mother who was exhausted. The mother gathered up the children and disappeared without a word of thanks or knowing who had rescued them. John was awarded the Scout Gilt Cross for bravery.

John already had achieved fame in Hertfordshire as he was the first person in Hertfordshire (and possibly the UK) to gain the Queen's Scout Award following the accession of Princess Elizabeth. In later life as a Vice President of Stevenage Scouting and MD of Austin's Funeral Directors (the oldest independent funeral business in the UK), he founded and developed the Harwood Park Crematorium where his Queen's Scout Certificate was always proudly displayed. John died on 1 April 2012. His funeral was held in St Mary's church, Welwyn, and Scouting was well represented.

It was a sad day on 24 August 2005 when our sixth County Commissioner **Brigadier Freddie DeButts OBE, DL, (1976-1981)**, died aged 89. At first, he knew little about Scouting, except from his 8 years as County Chairman. He went on a fast-learning curve, starting by taking Wood Badge training at Gilwell Park. Launching himself into the role with great enthusiasm, he endeared himself to everyone especially Venture Scouts who loved to be in his company. Freddie was buried in the shade of a magnolia tree at his family church at Little Gaddesden. Several hundred attended his funeral. His book, *Memories of War and Peace 1939-1994*, became a best seller. His tenure as CC was the shortest, at 4.98 years, in the history of the County.



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