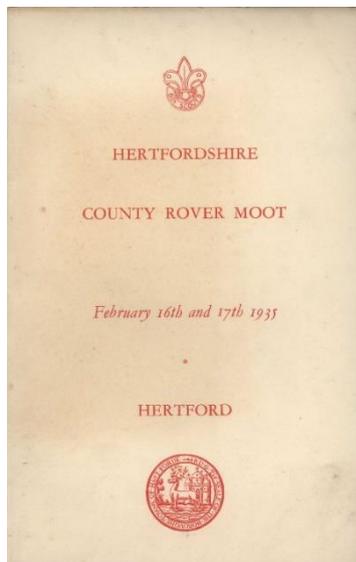
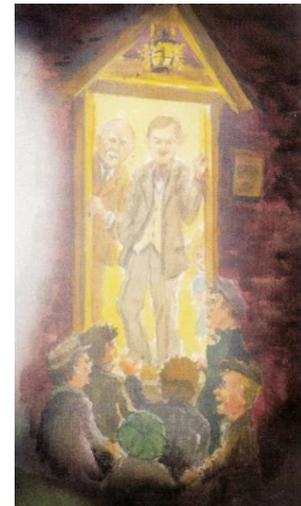
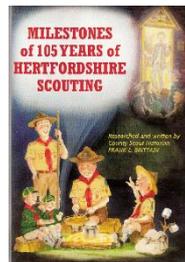


HERITAGE THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH (February 2018)

The 22nd February was shared by our Founders as their birth date. **B-P** in 1857 and his wife **Olave** in 1889. Delegates at the Fourth Girl Guide International Conference in the USA in 1926, highlighted the need to have a special day to be celebrated by Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. They decided to use the joint birth date of the Founders and it was called Thinking Day. At the thirtieth World Conference held in Ireland in 1998, the name was changed to 'World Thinking Day'. This is known as 'Founders Day'. National joint Services involving young Scouts and Guides, were held at Westminster Abbey for many years on 'Founders Day', but unfortunately these have not been held for some years in favour of a 'Service for Volunteers' which excludes young people.

It was on the 20th February 1908 that **Percy Everett (PWE)** wrote in his diary "Five or six Elstree boys approached me and asked me to form a Troop of Boy Scouts and be their Scoutmaster". The Founder **B-P**, was staying with **PWE** at the time and persuaded him to take up the challenge. (This scene is portrayed in the RH top corner and front cover of *Milestones of 105 Years of Hertfordshire Scouting*, published in 2013).



During the weekend of 16/17 February 1935 a County Rover Moot was held at Hertford. The weekend was full of interesting sessions and activities including a talk by the air ace **Lt. Owen Cathcart Jones F.R.G.S.**

On the 23/25 February 1939 St Albans District held their first Gang Show at Culver Hall. **Ralph Reader** the Founder of the 'London Gang Show' attended. The St Albans Show was produced by **Norman (Tiny) Fellowes** of the London Gang Show and he was assisted by **Cyril Swinson**, Chairman and Founder of the *Company of Ten* that is still active today in St Albans. The Musical Director was **A (Mac) Mackintosh** who later became Warden at Gilwell Park. Had it not been for the war starting in September of that year, the St Albans Gang Show might have held the record that is now held by Harpenden as the longest continually running Gang Show in the world. The St Albans Gang Show did not restart until 1949. I have interviewed a number of participants of this 1939 St. Albans Show and facilitated the attendance of **Ray Welch** to become a Star in their 2011 performance!

During two weekends in February 1955, history was made. Leaders found they were attending the 1000th Preliminary Training Course at the Croxley Green HQ, under the stern eye of **Harold Warren**. He was Hertfordshire's Deputy Camp Chief. All participants were issued with a symbolic "M" made from hardboard which they wore around their necks. One of these belonged to "**Kal**" **A. Barton-Smith** and is on display in the County Scout Heritage Centre at Well End.



On 5 February 1967, the First Apsley Rover Crew made a valiant attempt to retrieve the 'Elstree Sputnik Trophy'. This competition between Rover Crews around the County was to encourage a competitive challenge. The Apsley Crew were asked to compete in a regatta to be held at Marlow with the Rickmansworth and Chorleywood Crew. Six events were contested including rowing, sculling, and a canoe race. Apsley lost out to the superior Crew. The trophy was designed by the Elstree Rover Crew and inspired by **Ralph Wheeler** (centre) who was the DRSL. Ralph died in January 2018. The competition ceased in 1967 when Rover crews were disbanded nationally.



It was a significant day for Hertfordshire on 13 February 1968 when our then County Commissioner, **Melville Balsillie D.L.** was presented with his OBE at Buckingham Palace for his work with Scouting that had started in the 1930s. He is seen here with his wife Bess and son Iain. Melville died in 1973 and Bess died in 1991. Iain now lives in California.



Disaster struck on the London Underground on 28 February 1975 when a train failed to stop and many people were killed and injured when the front carriages were compressed down to a few feet. This tragedy claimed the life of **Dr Alistair Gordon**, a former Queen's Scout and Rover Scout from the Third Letchworth Scout Group. He was 32. Alistair was one of the first winners of the Explorer Belt Award and gained his Wood Badge at the age of 20. A memorial fund was set up and the proceeds purchased a bookcase and a number of books on mountaineering. These were presented to Lochearnhead Scout Station later in the year.



By good fortune, a former CC had by chance met with David, the son of another former CC **Brigadier Freddie de Butts (d. 2005)**. David showed considerable interest in making a visit to the County Scout Heritage Centre at Well End, to view his father's work in the County. In February 2018 I invited a number of other distinguished guests to join us. All those present had worked with Freddie during his time as County Chairman and County Commissioner (1973-1981).

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