

HERITAGE THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH (March 2018)

Following the death of our former County Commissioner **Melville Balsillie OBE., DL** in May 1973, The Anorak Club he had founded held their final reunion at Lochearnhead Scout Station on Easter Monday, 31 March 1975. This event was chosen to enable **Bess Balsillie** to unveil a stained-glass window to the memory of her husband, an outstanding and charismatic exemplar of Hertfordshire Scouting. The window is located adjacent to sanctuary corner. It displays the "Coat of Arms" of The Anorak Club, Melville's name and dates of his life span, and includes the Latin inscription "Levavi Oculos Meos in Montes" (I will lift up mine eyes unto the Hills). This is from Melville's favourite psalm 121. The dining room was packed with invited guests that included **John Bennett**, (Chairman of the Management Committee) (d.2007), C.C. **Freddie De Butts** (d.2005), **Tom Luxford** (who manufactured and glazed the sash that was installed into the window frame) and **Maurice Baker** (d.2018). The event was chronicled by **Ken Johnson** (d.2018) who was a supporter of Melville and accompanied him on many of his expeditions as scribe, illustrator and archivist.



Hertfordshire made Scouting history again on 2 March 1990, when girls were officially allowed to join Scout Troops. **Maxine Vyse** of the Second Aldenham Troop was the first girl in the UK to join. The event was widely reported in local and national press and on TV at the time. Maxine had joined her brother Stewart in the Troop.

In March 1992 the twenty-fifth Peak Assault Challenge was held in the Coed y Brenin Forest in North Wales. It was attended by the Chief Scout **Garth Morrison**. Presentations were made 131ft below ground in Llechwedd Slate Caverns. The photo shows **Paul Brenham CC** and **Roy Humphrey**, the co-founders of the event chatting with the Chief Scout (left).



During the Queen's Golden Jubilee in March 2002, a baton, that was carried by 5000 runners started its 50-day journey at Buckingham Palace and was carried across 20 counties on its way to the Commonwealth Games in Manchester. By day 23, it reached Baldock and was carried by **Andrea Soulsby**, ADC (Adult Training). At Henley on Thames, **Steve Harris**, DC for Hemel Hempstead District, took his turn.

On 7 March 2009, the First Rickmansworth Scout Group celebrated their centenary with a dinner at Watersmeet. The toast to "The Group" was proposed by a former Group Chairman **Dick Pooley** and the "Next 100 Years" by the DC **Peter Edwards**.





In March 1964 **Barry Nelson** of the First Bennetts End Scout Group became the fourth Hertfordshire Scout to receive the *Cornwell Scout Award*. He had fought for years against cancer during which he had bravely carried on with his Scouting achievements. The award was presented by County Commissioner **Melville Balsillie**. Barry died on 12 April 1964 aged 15 years.

On March 17 1946 it was the 24th birthday of **Philip Burton**. He had been in Ward 55 at Shrodells Hospital in Watford for 5 years suffering from rheumatoid arthritis. Philip was a member of the First Rickmansworth (Third South West Herts) Scout Group. To celebrate his birthday, his Group Scoutmaster **Frank Beazley** had prepared a



folder for Philip which contained a letter from the new Chief Scout, **Lord Rowallan**. The folder was presented to Philip by District Commissioner **Alan Emery**; Dr **Leslie Pears** (Assistant County Commissioner), his Scoutmaster **James Ewington**; Troop Leader **Harry Broomhead** and Patrol Leader **Peter Lillington**. In attendance were the Matron of Shrodells **Mrs A.G.Till**, Superintendent Nurse **Miss B Sayer** and Philip's Parents.

In March 2017, through the generosity of a benefactor **Mr Maclewraith**, St Albans District acquired a large 3 story building with a basement in Victoria Street. It was known as Pageant House. The building was used extensively for District and County Events. The Third St Albans Troop used the top floor as their HQ for the next 22 years. Their famous trek cart that was claimed to be the first in Hertfordshire lived in the basement. Pageant House was sold in 1944 and the finance raised was used to fund the purchase of land around the town for the building of new Scout Headquarters.

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