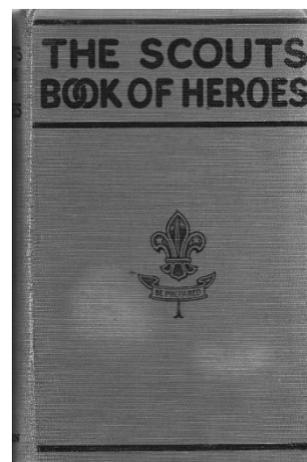


Heritage Thoughts for the Month (November 2019)

When I was appointed County Archivist by CC Roger Sands in 2003, I was given good advice by Roger and my neighbour Bernard Smith who was an old Scout. Bernard had a long history of working at Scout IHQ in London. He was the paid Proof Reader to F. Haydn Dimmock, the Editor of The Scout weekly newspaper. He was also a member of the Fourth St Albans Scout Group (as was his son) and was the joint author of "always a Scout", the history of St Albans Scout District. He also wrote several other pamphlets. Part of his advice to me was: "Always read the obituaries in *The Daily Telegraph* you will find them of great interest." This was a newspaper I had read since childhood as my parents took it although reading the Obituaries was not something I did until then. However, I have keenly followed his advice to this day. For nearly two decades have found this habit gives a remarkable insight into the great and the good of the UK who have "passed away." Amongst these Peers of the Realm, decorated armed forces personnel, Clergy and many other ordinary folk like you and me, there is always a sprinkling of Scouts and Guides from all over the UK and of course the occasional mention of those from Hertfordshire. My role has developed during this time and I leave much of the "archiving" to dedicated and valued members of my team while I concentrate on the History & Heritage aspect of my role, doing research, visiting relevant venues, people and events all around the UK and writing these up to include the Scouting history of our County in this monthly Newsletter.

On Friday 1 November I was invited to speak at a training course for European partners in Dacorum for a project to design "Digital Skills to Create Local History." For my course session these partners were researching how other European organisations carried out work in restoring, keeping and displaying their history. They were interviewing a wide range of people from Politics, Teaching, Medical, Youth Workers, Unions, and Business People. Participants were from several different countries in Europe (Italy, Bulgaria, Spain, Ireland, France and Latvia). They all spoke good English and asked me several questions, but none were former Scouts or Guides. We met in the conference room of the Community Action Group in Hemel Hempstead, close to where "Pie in the Sky" was filmed. I took along a number of items from our Museum, some "unique in the World" and explained their relevance to Hertfordshire and World Scouting. I displayed four categories; **World Jamborees; Hertfordshire Scouting; Haydn Dimmock; & B-P.** These displays and the explanation of each item were all received with great interest and were passed around the group. I also explained to the group how Hertfordshire became the first Scout County in the World. I have been asked to return for the next course in the new-year.

100 Years ago in 1919, a book was published that was to become a "Scout Best Seller." *The Scouts Book of Heroes* was researched and written by Miss Vera C Barclay, and Edited by F. Haydn Dimmock. They were both Scouts from Hertfordshire. The book describes in explicit detail the exploits of British Scouts who had distinguished themselves during WW1. As it is the centenary of this book (that we hold in the County Scout Library), I thought it appropriate to list the names of these Hertfordshire Scouts, their Troops at that time, together with the Awards they gained for their heroic actions. Particular mention is of Private A.E. Bentley who was awarded the D.C.M. (Distinguished Conduct Medal). Several pages are devoted to this brave Scout who was a member of the First Cheshunt Scout Troop.



A *précis* - "At the height of battle, it seemed as if a sledge hammer had caught me with full force. A great piece of shell hit me in the thigh and brought me to the ground. I could feel the hot blood soaking through my clothes and a strange burning that grew more and more fierce. The sounds of the battle were all around me, shouted orders, the thud and ear splitting crash of shells and vibrations that drowned out everything. Through this commotion and close by, I could hear a man groaning and whimpering with pain".

For **Private Bentley**, it was more than he could bear, painfully dragging himself closer in the fierceness of his own pain, he was at last at the side of the wounded young man. He applied a tourniquet and a bandage that made the poor boy grateful. But this was not all, it was also his lot to administer First Aid to three other severely wounded young Soldiers further along the trench each fearing death was drawing near. **Bentley** fell back exhausted and waited for his own death to relieve him of his pain. He survived another eight hours before the stretcher-bearers came along the trench. They took him and the other wounded to safety, who, but for the skilful badging of **Scout Bentley** would have died hours before.

The following Awards were conferred on Scouts from Hertfordshire and are listed in the book:-

MILITARY CROSS (MC) – P.L. **W.H. Anneley**, First High Barnet Troop, 2/Lt. ;
P.L. **F. Blackmore**, Third Ware Troop, Lt. ; A.S.M. **Thomas Rhys**, First Welwyn Troop, Captain:
DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS (DFC) – Scout **C. Edwards**, First St Albans Troop, Flt. Sub-Lt.
R.N.A.S.: DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL (DCM) – A.S.M. **Leonard Sell**, Third Ware Troop, Cpl.
R.A.M.C. : Scout **A. E. Bentley**, First Cheshunt Troop, Pte. :
MILITARY MEDAL (MM) – Scout **E. Calley**, Fourth St Albans Troop, Pte. ;
Second, **R. Castle** Third Ware, Cpl. : Scout, **William Cheshire**, First South Mimms Troop. Dvr, R.F.A:
Scout **Frank Gough**, Third St Albans Pte: P.L., **E.C. Higgs**, Second St Albans, L.Cpl.:
PL **Charles Lawence**, First South Mimms Troop, Sgt.: **F. Lee** Scout, First Wormley Troop, Sgt. :
Scout **Horace Sciwener** Third Boxmoor Troop, Pte.: **E.G.C. Ward** Scoutmaster, Sixth St Albans
Troop, Scout **Clifford Waterhouse**, First New Mill End, Pte. : PL **S.T. Williams**, First Berkhamstead,
Pte. : MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL (MSM) – Scout **Frederick J. Long**, First South Mimms Troop,
L.Cpl.,

Acronym's explained: - P.L. Patrol Leader / 2 - Second / Lt.- Lieutenant / A.S.M – Assistant
Scoutmaster / Flt. – Flight / R.N.A.S. – Royal Naval Auxiliary Service / Cpl. – Corporal /
R.A.M.C. – Royal Auxiliary Motor Corps / Pte. – Private / Dvr. – Driver / R.F.A. Royal Flight Auxiliary /
L/Cpl. – Lance Corporal. D.C.M. – Distinguished Conduct Medal, -- Sgt – Sergeant /

On Remembrance Sunday, I was invited by Oxfordshire Girl Guiding who, in co-operation with Marlborough School, were tabling an Exhibition - *Woodstock Remembers WW1 Then and Now*. Oxfordshire Scouting has many former associations with Hertfordshire Scouts and I have attended many of their events but this was the first time I had attended one put by Oxfordshire Guides. The exhibition was for two days 8/10 November at the Woodstock Guide HQ in Union Street. On a bright sunny and warm day, Sylvia and I attended and



were greeted by the Teacher from the School who had masterminded the exhibition. (Part of the exhibition is shown here). It was very well researched and presented. It concentrated on those people from Woodstock who had died in the conflict. I spoke to a number of people including the Guide Leaders who had taken some months of preparation to produce the result with great attention to detail.

For those of you who may be camping or hiking nearby and who like to explore, I draw your attention to the location of the grave of **Florence Nightingale, 1829 – 1910**. This can be found in the churchyard of St Margaret's, East Wellow in Hampshire. There is also a display inside the church and many other interesting features. M.R. OS 185 304 203.

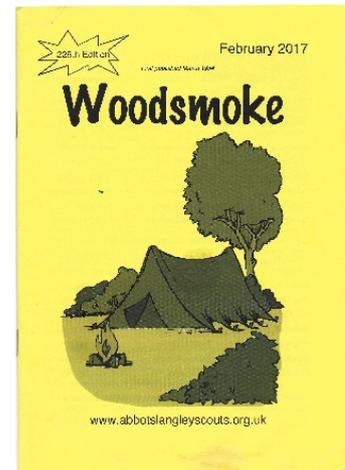
Long outstanding improvements to the County Office at Well End Activity Centre continue. These include greatly improved access for those with additional needs to all buildings including the County Heritage Centre and should be all completed before the New Year. Later improvements to the Heritage Centre will include access to the former Archive Cabin at the rear. This area will then be included into the main exhibition area and will allow an extension of the display area for artwork and other items that are currently unable to be shown. The removal of the rotten windows will also add to the interior wall space. It was following the County AGM on 13 July 1957 that was held at Well End for some years, that the County Scout Heritage Centre was opened by **Admiral Sir Thomas Halsey** a County Vice President to which **Freddy O'Hare** (Assistant Warden) and I (County Quartermaster) and many others were invited. The building is dedicated to **F. Haydn Dimmock** a famous National and Hertfordshire Scout who was the Editor of *The Scout* weekly Magazine for 58 years.



I was sorry to hear of the death of **Victoria Pleydell-Bouverie**, the wife of a Deputy Lieutenant of Hertfordshire. As a former High Sheriff he and his wife visited the Eleventh Welwyn Garden City Scout Group during their sponsored abseiling from a tower in the car park at Safeway's Supermarket in 1998.

Barrie Guy Wood 1936 – 2019 has Gone Home. He was a well-liked and active Leader with the Fifth Potters Bar Scout Group and gained his many practical skills from his trips abroad as a Civil Engineer.

I am always pleased to receive **Group and District Magazines** and the recent edition of Woodsmoke is edited by **Pauline Styles**. Pauline is a member of the large and successful Abbots Langley Scout Group in North Watford District. This was the 236th edition of their Newsletter that was first published in March 1954. It is always an interesting read and moved to A4 format some years ago to ensure a good display of images of the Group's activities. The magazine was founded by **Bill White** and has had nine Editors to date. It is considered to be the UK's longest continually running Group Magazine. (The copy shown is of an earlier edition).



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