

HERITAGE THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH (October 2017)

Ray Chambers (d.2006) was an outstanding Hitchin Venture Scout Leader who later became ACC (Venture Scouts). He was a man of great charisma, enthusiasm and determination and had many achievements to his credit. One of these was when he organised the largest Hertfordshire County Camp at Gilwell Park totalling 10,000 participants. This was the largest gathering from a UK County at Gilwell Park and included a visit by the Chief Scout **Garth Morrison**. As ACC (VS), Ray played a major role in the County Competition *The Peak Assault Challenge*, building up a considerable emergency monetary fund and enthusing Units to attend often making the total participation to well over 1000. The image below shows the 2009 winners.



In October 1987, in recognition of his skills and as a tribute to his popularity, *The Chambers Pot Competition* was founded by the County Venture Scout Council. It was a quiz for teams of Venture Scouts and the prize was a drinking tankard or Pot. This was presented to the winning team by Ray. The competition was very popular. It was organised by an enthusiastic ideas team and lasted for 10 years (until 1997), with up to 40 teams of 5 Venture Scouts, who met usually at The Drill Hall in Ware. In later years as other ACC (VS) were appointed, came **Marilyn (Hudson's) Mug** and **Rosemary (Charsley's) Bowl**.

HERTFORDSHIRE SCOUT NEWS



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OCTOBER 1963

In October 1963 at the invitation of the County Commissioner **Melville Balsillie**, (d.1973) and **Ken Johnson**, a Rover Scout from Letchworth & Baldock District was invited to take on the role as Editor, and restart the *County Magazine and Newsletter* after a break of some 30 years. *Hertfordshire Scout News* was reborn and is still published today as *Headlines*. Originally it was published 11 times a year by hand and typewriter and delivered by volunteers. Later, for the young people of the County, a *Broadsheet* was produced with instruction that it should be on the Group noticeboard by the first of the month. This was achieved without the aid of any computer for nearly 40 years. The cover photo on the first edition, by **Roger Keeney**, shows **Trevor Thorne** of the Fifth Letchworth Scout Group. Publication nearly ceased in 2013 but following a fierce campaign it was saved with most Leaders voting to receive it electronically but 110 electing to still receive a hard copy through the post 3-4 times a year. A Communication and Media Officer, **Amy Bartlett**, is now employed to oversee this and the County Website.

On 17 October 2000, Scouts from Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City Districts came to the rescue when at 12.23 hrs, the London to Leeds Intercity 125 train derailed at 115mph due to a fractured rail. Four passengers in the restaurant car were killed and 70 injured. **Tony Lyall** ADC (VS) W.G.C., worked for Hatfield Council Gold Committee that planned for all emergencies. He immediately seconded **Matt Royall**, SL of the First W.G.C. Scout Group as there was a need for large tents for a variety of purposes. Matt reported *“When we arrived we were hurriedly ushered to the restricted area. I’ve never needed to pitch a mess tent on the A1000 before and there was a strange feeling when carrying out this work only separated by the thickness of a hedge from all the chaos that was on the other side. By the evening tents had arrived from other Scout Groups. We were assisted by a minibus full of police cadets who surprisingly seemed to have little idea of how to erect a 20-foot Mess Tent. The tents and marquees were required for Central Command, muster points, equipment storage, refreshment, meeting and a press conference centre”*. A memorial garden was created the next year at the side of the A1000.



In another ‘First for Hertfordshire Scouting’, on 10 October 2010 the County launched the first lottery in the UK to benefit Scouting. This capital appeal had been launched at the County AGM in 2009 and was originally to raise funds towards the purchase of the freeholds of Phasels Wood and Tolmers Activity Centres. The idea was initiated by **Roger Sands**, the Appeal Director. From the start, chances were available at £1 per week, monthly, quarterly or annually by direct debit. In December 2012, an improved scheme was launched with the first prize being £25,000 when 6 numbers matched. Chances can be sold to Scout Groups, for a commission when the Group sales number is quoted on the application. Groups and Activity Centres have benefitted by over £7,700 in the 3 years since commissions have been paid.

Colin McIntyre, the longest serving of Hertfordshire’s 20 County Secretaries (1986 – 2011) (and anywhere in the UK), was awarded an MBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours. He attended Buckingham Palace on 19 October 2012 with his wife Georgina and his daughters Ann and Janet. There were 92 recipients of various awards, but Colin was the only one present wearing Scout Uniform. The award was announced “For Services to Scouting in Hertfordshire”.



A ceremony in St Albans Abbey to welcome the new Lord Lieutenant of the County **Robert Voss CBE** was held on 1 October 2017. A number of Hertfordshire Scouts were invited to attend and we look forward to meeting Robert at future County Scout Events.

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