

HERITAGE THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH (September 2017)

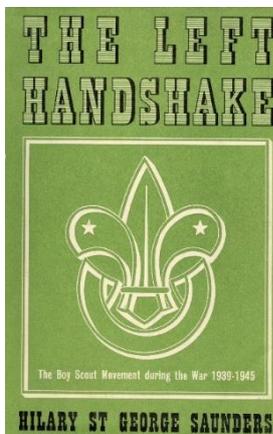
The outbreak of War on 3 September 1939, brought the demand for trained Scouts to the forefront. In a repeat of what had happened in WWI 25 years earlier, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides who were too young or old to fight, volunteered to carry out essential Home Front work. Hundreds of Scouts were used to erect Anderson and Morrison shelters in back or front gardens and inside people's homes. Throughout the whole country, 40,000 Morrison shelters were assembled by Scouts inside people's homes. With 200 parts, it was a challenge to get these erected quickly. A good team of practised Scouts could get one assembled in 20 mins.

What happened in Hertfordshire was similar all over the UK. Like many rural areas, our county became host to a number of evacuees. These came from the coastal towns as well as London. During the 5 years of war there were 60 million changes of address in a civilian population of 38 million. This was because evacuation was not permanent and children (over 4 years old) were often moved back and forth in waves depending on the intensity of the bombing.

According to *The Peewits Patrol Log* of the First Croxley Green Scout Group, there were so many evacuee boys in their area that they were able to form a whole Troop. By 1940 some of the evacuees had returned home but there were still 20 boys meeting on a Tuesday evening under the leadership of **Dennis Quick** and **Norman Logan**. Dennis can be seen in the back row of this Patrol photo.



A rare book *The Left Handshake* (1949) describes fully the work of the Boy Scouts and Rovers during WW2 and includes mention of some Hertfordshire Troops.



In the days when Adult Leader Training was still voluntary, Wood Badge courses at Gilwell Park were much in demand in the Jubilee year of Scouting (1957). One of these was rather special as it was only for Deputy Camp Chief's. (The head of the Training Team in a County and a 4 bead Wood Badge appointment). Amongst those attending Course No. 256/7 were **Derek Turner** and **Dr Leslie Pears** from Hertfordshire. They are third and sixth from the left in the back row. In the four weeks after the 1957 Jamboree, 672 Leaders from 73 nations attended Wood Badge Courses at Gilwell Park. Over one remarkable weekend, nine Courses were running simultaneously!

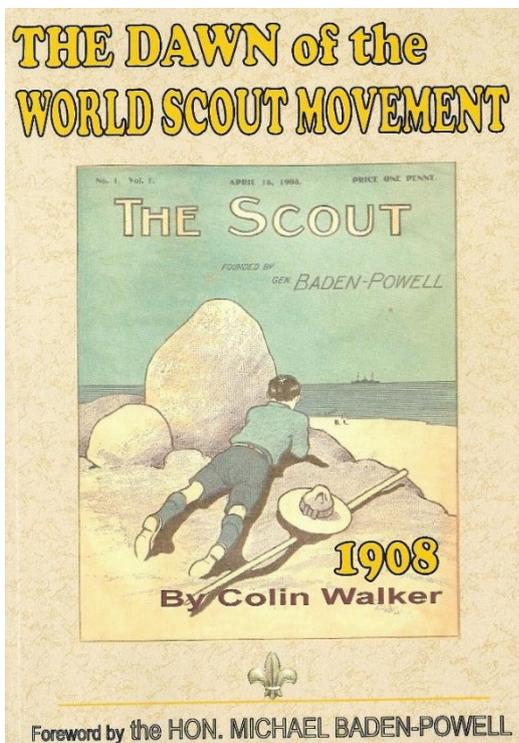


In 1940 Second Lieutenant **Ellis Talbot**, a former Scout with the Elstree School Troop, distinguished himself. He headed a bomb disposal team who were called to Loughor railway station in Wales. His team had to dig for 12 ½ hrs to reach the bomb and they had no idea if it had a delayed action device that could activate anytime from 5 mins to 40 hours after contact with land. Once it had been uncovered Talbot put a rope around this relatively lightweight bomb and hauled it to ground level. Calling to his men to take cover he hoisted the bomb onto his shoulder and carried to waste ground where it was exploded. For this act of courage Ellis was awarded the George Cross. **Ellis Talbot** was later killed in action in 1941.



For information on Military Awards earned by any Hertfordshire Scout in your Group, contact Frank, the County Scout Historian.

From 22 August – 4 September 1908, the world's first Scout Camp took place at Humshaugh in Northumberland. Participants could apply by entering a competition in *The Scout* weekly newspaper. Scouts had to purchase copies, collect the coupons and include them with their application. Thousands of Boy Scouts applied including 5 from Hertfordshire. They were **C. Parkes** (Rickmansworth), **R. Mann** (Hertford), **R. Mathews** (Stevenage), **R. T Cole** (Barnet) and **G. Smith** (Buntingford). Unfortunately, none got a place. Thirty boys attended this camp through the competition and **B-P** invited another Patrol of 6. Some of these boys had attended the experimental Brownsea Island Camp held the previous year. **Percy Everett** (Chief Scout's Commissioner) and C.C. for Hertfordshire also attended. The site of this first Scout Camp is marked by an obelisk. It shows the dates of visiting Chief Scouts. For a full description of the Camp you need to read *The Dawn of the World Scout Movement* by *Colin Walker* (2008). Colin is a world famous Scout Historian, author, and a member of the Hertfordshire Heritage Team.



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