

Heritage Thoughts for the Month (August/September 2018)

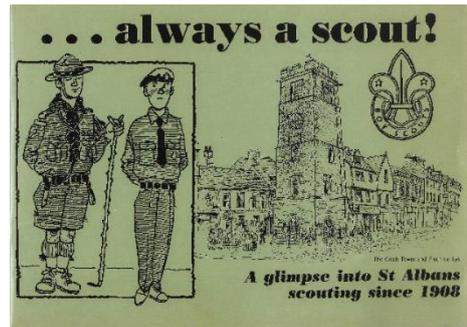
Hundreds of friends of **Alan Afford** attended his funeral on 6 August. He had been a significant member of the Welwyn Garden City ASU for many years and had died at the age of 85. I had first met Alan at the World Jamboree in 1957 as a member of the Hertfordshire contingent to the World Indaba, and then again at the 50-year 3 day 1957 World Jamboree reunion at Cambridge in 2007 at which over 300 attendees or visitors to the Jamboree attended from 27 countries. I also record the sad news of the death of **Ian Baker** aged 84. He had been a strong member of the First Braughing Scout Group and was Drum Major in their Band. This is about the last proper Scout Band in Hertfordshire, having survived all others for over 40 years. He was also brother to **Roger Baker BEM**.

More sad news, as I was informed of the death of **Robert Charles Wilkinson** on 25 August. He was 79 years of age. At the age of 26 he was recruited into the 3rd Ware Scout Group and served under the strict guidance **Harold Warren** as an ASM in 1964. During the transformation of Scouting in the late 1960s he became Venture Leader, later becoming ADC (VS) for Ware District in 1987. In later years Bob served as Chairman of the Ware District Team and was a member of the Orchard Farm and Lochearnhead Scout Activity Committees. He served in all his appointments with enthusiasm. The funeral was held on 11 September at St. Mary's Church Ware and was well attended. Tributes were made from his close friends in Scouting. Much of his extensive collection of Scouting memorabilia has been donated to the County Scout Archives including thousands of photographic images. See also October edition for an update.

Even more... I have heard from his family that **Roy Alphey** a former member of the County Training Team, and ADC for St Albans died on 8 February this year when he was taken suddenly and critically ill. Roy was highly intelligent and a respected Commissioner with a great knowledge of local Scouting. Roy served both St Albans District and the County very well and was known to walk to visit the St Albans Groups as he did not drive.

The Herts Advertiser, has published a list of the 46 people who are Hertfordshire Community Award Finalists. These include familiar names, **Patricia Hall** who was a former Girlguiding District Commissioner and **Melvyn Teare MBE** the former Scout District Commissioner. Both from St Albans and have been listed as potential winners in their own selected class. Final assessment in the autumn.

Bob Peatling was a great benefactor to St Albans Scouting. He and **Bernard Smith** co-wrote '*...always a scout!*'. This was a book depicting the history of St Albans Scouting from 1908 – 1983. They were both long standing St Albans Scouts, Bernard was a member of the Fourth St Albans Troop and professionally was proof reader to **F. Haydn Dimmock** the Editor of *The Scout*. Bob had written an earlier book '*No Surrender at*



Arnhem'. It had drawn on his experiences of life as a newly married 18-year-old soldier being dropped into Arnhem during operation "Market Garden". He had become separated from his unit during the conflict and to avoid capture, went into hiding where his Scouting skills became most useful. After some weeks of stealing food and living off water extracted from a storage tank in a loft, he was found by the Resistance Movement. His book was published after the war that told of his exploits during his hiding, capture, escape and journey home and then being reunited with his wife. It was not until I interviewed **Bernard Smith**, that I learned of Bob's adventures. I made contact and visited him at his home in Wimborne, Dorset. Bernard died in 2005, aged 103 and Bob in 2007, aged 83.

An event I thought was long passed, was the Funeral of **Kenneth Robert Drummond Johnson**. This took place on 21 September. Ken had died on 13 January. He had very few distance relatives which it is why it took so long for his committal. As reported at the time, he was a most remarkable man, who achieved much during his innovative years as a Leader in Letchworth & Baldock District. He was also the founding editor of several County & District magazines. The longest running were '*Headlines*' and '*Co-ordinator*'. In 2000 he was awarded the highest award in Scouting, a Silver Wolf, and was a member of the County History & Heritage Team.



It was a privilege to be asked by his cousin to compile a eulogy which I read at the impressive new Hitchin Crematorium on 21 September. Many of his old friends and Scouting colleagues attended at short notice. A further ceremony is in planning to scatter the ashes of **KJ** and his dear mother at a later date in Letchworth Garden City. *Above right, a rare photo of Ken taken at the anniversary to mark the end of WW2 in 2005.*

At the end of September, Sylvia and I spent a few days of recuperation on the Isle of Wight. A place that has many connections to Hertfordshire Scouting. **Lady Sally Grylls** (mother of the Chief Scout) took some time out of her very busy social schedule to meet with us at our hotel on the day of our departure.



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