

## Heritage Thoughts for the Month (September 2019)

September is always a busy month, which this year included two visits to Gilwell Park. The first was to view the latest extension to the Promise Pathway. These works were, as usual, completed just prior to the Gilwell Reunion and now incorporate the names of 858 Scouts, Groups or events from all over the world. Hertfordshire has 20 individual plaques, the following from Hertfordshire Scouts are named: *18<sup>th</sup> Hitchin Scout Group; 2nd Cockfosters Scout Group (Leaders) -- Len Spikesley, Hazel Jordan, Don & Pam Hellmuth, Mavis Gear; Alan King; Bert & Joyce Anson; Bill Turnbull; Brian Hough 1<sup>st</sup> Tring; Denis & Audrey Smith; Frank Brittain; Geoff Kavenagh (DC Royston); Hatfield District Rover Crew (Meeting Since 1961); Hertfordshire Scout County (The First in The World); Hertfordshire Scouts (Without Logo); London Colney Scout Group James Kingham; Margaret & Colin Smale; Mutjac VSU; Norman Hyde; Sandridge Scouts (Atkins & Wells Families); Steve Barnard; Tony Cobb.*

The second visit was to the Gilwell Reunion; which this year marked the Centenary of the acquisition of Gilwell Park. I met **Colin Walker** and the **Michal Baden-Powell Rover Crew and SAS Unit** who put on a display about the engineering and refurbishment work the Crew carry out there, As a member of the Crew, I was invited to display a number of items including a briefcase that belonged to **B-P** and a typewriter of **F. Haydn Dimmock's**. I also accompanied **Colin** on the several well attended tours. On the Saturday evening I attended a private investiture of five new Rover Scouts in the R.C. Chapel that was also attended by **Michael Baden-Powell** and his wife. There are always several members of the **Baden-Powell** family attending and this year I was introduced to someone I had not met before; **Annarella**, the niece of **Gill Clay** (who is a Granddaughter of **B-P**).

During the month, I was also invited to a presentation by **Unit 15 (Hertfordshire, Psychedelic Squirrels)** who have just returned from the World Scout Jamboree in North America. I have attended many of these presentations over the decades and can state from experience that this was the best produced event I have been to.

I attended 5 Funeral/Memorial Services during August - September. The first was **John Bevil**, who passed away aged 75 on 30 July. He was a well-liked and much respected Assistant Scout Leader of the Fourth Potters Bar Scout Troop. His Service was held at the West Herts Crematorium on 19 August in the presence of many Scouting friends from the District. The Tribute was read by his son Alan, unfortunately I was unable to attend the reception that was held at The Strafford, Potters Bar.

The second was the funeral for a former CC of Hertfordshire Guides, **Gill Hancock OBE**. Gill (or Jill as many knew her) died aged 89 on 17 July. The service was held in the Church of St Peter & St Paul, Little Gaddesden, on 20 August and was conducted by the **Revd John Russell** to a congregation that filled the church. As expected, the majority of the congregation were Girlguiding (Hertfordshire) and included four former Girlguiding CCs. The singing of *Kumbaya* with so many in the congregation was very moving! Following the service, we retired to Ashridge Golf Club, Berkhamsted and I was able to chat to several friends that I had not seen for many years and was introduced to the new Guide County Archivist.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Century Church of St Mary's Graveley, near Stevenage, was the venue for the funeral of **Gwen Luff** on 30 August. Gwen died on 13 August aged 93 and had been a long and faithful member of 7<sup>th</sup> Borehamwood before moving to Stevenage a few years ago. Gwen had been in a Care Home and had written me in her last days there. Her card was handed to me at her Funeral, noting, "*I thank you for all the support you have given me and my husband Frank*", she also referred to the many enjoyable trips the family had made to Well End Activity Centre and Lochearnhead Scout Station on working parties. Following the service, we were invited to the home of one of Gwen's sons. There, I was able to chat with a number of mourners; **Jeff Harvey** a former Scout and leader with the 7<sup>th</sup> Borehamwood who lives in Suffolk; **George Parsons** the Organist, who had not been a Scout but he and his father had been Organists at Christ Church Cockfosters where I was Baptised. I had also served there for many years as a Scout Leader and Sidesperson. I also had a long chat with **Graham Hubert and his wife** who share time between the UK and Cape Town. Graham had been a Scout at the First Elstree Group. They were most interested to hear how that **B-P** was buried in Nyeri, Kenya. **Jim Innes** former DC, and **Peter Cowland** a former ADC were also in attendance.

A Thanksgiving Service for **Ron Worthy** was held at the Radlett United Free Church on 18 September. This had been preceded by a Committal at West Herts Crematorium. Ron had been a Police Cadet and remained in the Force serving the village of Radlett for most of his working life. He became a member of the First Radlett Scout Group and led countless expeditions to Snowdonia and the Lake District. He was twice a former DC of Elstree and had achieved much progress during his time in the role. Following retirement from that role he became a District Vice President and President of the First Radlett Scout Group.

The funeral of **Arnie Baker** was held on 24 September at West Herts Crematorium. Arnie died on 27 August aged 69. He was clearly a much loved and outstanding leader at the Croxley Green Scout Group and was a well-liked DC of Rickmansworth & Chorleywood for 8 years. He originally qualified as a Structural Engineer and worked mainly designing new Hospitals. He and his wife moved to Croxley Green in 1979 and he became a Governor at Harvey Road School. He held a number of Roles in the Group including that of Chairman. The Service at the West Herts Crematorium was led by his long-term friend the **Revd Miriam Mugan** who is the Vicar at All Saints Church, Croxley Green.



This month is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first showing of a painting by **G. Hillyard Swinstead** at the Royal Academy, London. The painting, "The Scout Good Turn" (left) was painted in 1916 and was one of a series depicting activities by Scouts. A copy hangs in the County Scout Museum at Well End, which was donated by the **First South West Herts Scout Group** as a

“thankyou” for the help we gave in organising an exhibition at their HQ during their centenary in 2008 (they were the first Scout Troop in Hertfordshire). The painting tells the story of a Patrol of Scouts who at camp found a lost young girl who had fallen, injuring her leg. They applied first aid, made up a stretcher and conveyed her home. The Patrol Leader is shown handing the girl to her mother and you can see the girl has a shoe missing from her injured leg. The missing shoe is held by one of the five Scouts in the search team who are standing next to the Scoutmaster. He is relating to Grandma what had happened. In the distance, a Scout is bringing a Doctor and another Scout Patrol is hitching up a horse and cart in case the girl needs transporting to Hospital. *A little known fact is that if you count their legs the Painter could not fit them all in!*

I wrote the books about the History of Hertfordshire Scouting (2008 & 2013) which were distributed free to every Scout Group in Hertfordshire with the compliments of the County Executive. During compilation it became obvious that it would not be possible to research and record every Adult Award, so therefore only included the highest, ‘The Silver Wolf’ from 1909, all ‘Awards of Gallantry’ and ‘Civic Awards’. I am delighted to now say that this mammoth task of collating has been completed by one of the Heritage Team, **Janet Sands**. Janet volunteered to spend the best part of a year managing this project and researching the awards from every available publication where they may, should or could have been recorded. As a result of her thorough work, the list of 1860 adults and their Awards have been recorded onto a searchable system, giving the recipient, District, year of the Award and its description. If you have any queries or you think someone is missing relating to past historic Awards of the following: Award of Merit; Medal of Merit; Silver Acorn; (and Bar to any of these) and the Silver Wolf, please contact the County Heritage Team.

During September, I also visited an event as a member of The Smallford Heritage Railway Trust. This local railway ran the short distance between The Abbey (St Albans) and Hatfield Stations from 1865 – 1965. The Railway has a Scouting relevance, it was in 1933 that Hertfordshire held a County Rally at Hatfield Park and I quote from ‘Milestones of 105 years of Hertfordshire Scouting’, *“The Railways (LMS & LNER were very efficient and keen to accommodate the special circumstances of the Hertfordshire Scout Rally. Almost everyone arrived at Hatfield by train as few people had cars. The County Secretary, **Rob Fisher** helped to organise the transportation of Scouts to and from Hatfield and from 10 different locations in the County. The Rail authorities ran a special excursion train from Watford Junction at 2.35 p.m.”.*

Members of the County Heritage Team also attended The Epping Forest District Museum of Heritage and Culture on 20 September to view an exhibition - *Scouts, Skills and a century of change: the untold story of Gilwell Park*. This was put together by the Heritage Team at Gilwell Park. It started on 10 August and runs until 12 October.

**FRANK BRITTAIN**

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