

## HERITAGE THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH of March 2020.

**On a historic note of 100 years ago – Percy Everett the Hertfordshire CC** wrote to **B-P**. “Dear Sir Robert, I enclose a copy of *The Hertfordshire Scouts’ Annual Report for 1920*. I planned to send it to you some weeks ago but it got misplaced. Yours sincerely, (signed P. W. Everett).” The letter was returned inscribed “Many thanks. A most interesting one and complete in every small compass. The comparative table of growth was very interesting” (initialled RBP 22.03.20). (Ed – This will have been when the Scout year ended on 31 March. It was later changed to 31 December).

In the same year, in his report to the National Committee of the Scout Council, **Percy Everett the CC**, (and right hand man to B-P), highlighted the work that Hertfordshire Scouts had carried out during the Great War. He stressed the lead that his County had taken in establishing “Home Front” work in the UK and specifically mentioned the high number of War Service Badges gained in Hertfordshire, (996). These included 107 of 100 days Service, 15 Coast Watching badges of 84 days, 2 of 1 year and 1 of two-year status. The colour of the rings was changed towards the end of the war. Of the three Silver and two Gilt Crosses for bravery, that were awarded to Hertfordshire Scouts in 1918, he made the point that in the whole of the UK there were only 35 of these awards.



**Great news from Gilwell Park.** After some years of my badgering and suggestions, the Promise Pathway has been copied and reproduced by the Fundraising Team. It is available on the internet at [updates@scouts-news.org.uk](mailto:updates@scouts-news.org.uk). There are now nearly 1000 bricks of various sizes giving information from all over the World about Scout Groups, anniversaries, and as memorials to those individuals who have “Gone Home”. There are now quite a few from Hertfordshire. These have been put in by myself on behalf of the County, or by individual Groups, Districts or families. There are brick sizes to fit all pockets. My advice is to select black (not the gold) paint as an infill to the lettering as this shows up better on a sunny day. The brick shown is 24 x 18 inches and displays the Hertfordshire emblem. It is to the memory of 5 Leaders who have now “Gone Home.” They were all from the same Group in Barnet District. In 1965 Barnet District was transferred from Hertfordshire to the County of Greater London North. This brick was funded by donations (paid direct to the Fundraising Team) from past male and female members of the Group who call themselves *The Old Cocks*. They still meet at reunions on a regular basis at Tolmers Activity Centre and on other organised trips away. I recommend you consider this method of remembering past Leaders, young people, Groups or events. You need to speak to the Fundraising Team at Gilwell Park in the first instance. I visit Gilwell 3-4 times a year. If you would like a guided tour of this and the other interesting features of the Park, please let me know.

**The Commonwealth Observance Day Service from Westminster Abbey**, was televised on the 9<sup>th</sup> March. Now that I have retired from full time work I was able to view it on TV for the first time. I found it a most interesting and moving experience and was pleased to see so many young people present including representatives from UK Scouting and Guiding.

**If you receive an invitation to the County AGM in June**, you will be able to view a special display by the County Heritage Team to mark the centenary of the First World Scout Jamboree that took place at Olympia in 1920, and who took part from Hertfordshire. *This item may be superseded by a later directive owing to the Coronavirus!*

*Like other Newspapers of quality, The Daily Telegraph* carries a daily selection of Announcements. (Births, deaths etc). It has become of increasing interest in recent years that the Obit columns occasionally carry information about the Scouting and Guiding commitments of the deceased.

**I am always pleased to receive a copy of the Elstree & Borehamwood Town Crier.** This latest edition details the centenary of film making and Television Production at Elstree Studios. Many of the office blocks were demolished some years ago when a Tesco Supermarket was built although the TV studios remain. Programmes like **Strictly come Dancing** are broadcast from there.



**I have always considered** that part of my role is to keep in touch with old Scouts who are not as active as they used to be. I arranged to visit a former County Commissioner, **Paul Brenham MBE., DL.** who like me has recently become an octogenarian. Paul has an impressive profile that is too long to detail here. In summary, we first met in 1953 at a County Patrol Leaders Conference at Well End. This was organised by Barnet District and I think we may have been allocated to the same Patrol. We continued to meet up over our teenage years when attending qualifying badge courses and Patrol Leader training sessions that were required on our route to become Queen's Scouts. These Courses were mainly held at Well End and we also met up at other functions over the years as Senior Scouts. We then lost touch until Paul became involved in the new Section of Venture Scouting in the late 1960s. As time passed Paul became more involved, becoming a County Adviser for Venture Scouts and leading the Hertfordshire Unit to the World Jamboree in New Mexico in 1979. He became County Commissioner of Hertfordshire in 1988 serving nearly 7 years. Following this he was appointed by TSA to the demanding role of Chief Commissioner of England from 1995 – 2003. This involved many weekends away from home. He was then appointed as Chairman of the Brownsea Island Management Committee and for 5 years saw through the design and building of the new **Baden Powell Outdoor Centre.** This was not without its problems when dealing with the National Trust but he was helped by our former Field Commissioner, **Arthur Martin** who had been involved in some of the initial planning. The Centre was opened in 2007 by **Lady Patience Baden-Powell** (to which I had the privilege to be invited). Paul is a County Vice President of Hertfordshire Scouts and knows the procedures for acting as Chairman of the County AGM better than most!

**I also visited Ray Vassie who is a very active Scout Commissioner in Harpenden District.** Ray was invested as a Wolf Cub into the 37 Willesden Scout Group in 1960 and became an ASL in the Troop in 1970, he was SL from 1971 until 1981. During this time he completed his Wood Badge at Gilwell Park and was appointed ADC(LT) on 13 March 1974. In 1981 he moved to Harpenden to start a family and rejoined Scouting in 2000 as Property Co-ordinator on the District Executive. He was appointed ADC (Communications) on 12 March 2003. Ray received the Award for Merit in 2009, and the Silver Wolf in 2017. Ray deals efficiently with a variety of projects within the District, Leader Skills Training; organising District Events; Public Relations; Supporting Groups and Units with Activities and Training. In 2008 he attended the District Expedition to Ghana, has supported four other Expeditions and has written a Scouting Handbook for Ghana Scout Leaders.



**I am sorry to report the “Going Home” of one of our distinguished County Vice Presidents, Roy Alfred Humphrey, who died at the age of 95 earlier this month.**

Roy has been a lifelong Scout with Hertfordshire and mainly with 25 South West Herts Scout Group. He held a number of appointments from 1942 and welcomed the Advanced Party Report in 1967 that brought in Venture Scouting to replace Senior Scouts. As a new VSL, Roy excelled in the role, enabling his North Watford Venture Unit to achieve success in many District and County Competitions. He was appointed ACC (Venture Scouts) in 1971 and a Deputy County Commissioner for 10 years in 1981 - 1990. He was appointed a County Vice President in 1997. Roy encouraged the Unit to travel and to plan International Expeditions whenever possible. His principles included to always achieve high standards in all things including uniform! One of Roy's

great successes was the establishing of the **Peak Assault Challenge**. This still runs today. The original idea came from a very large night expedition that was organised by the Senior Scout Leader of the First Datchworth Troop, **Paul Brenham**. Using his contacts with the Territorial Army and Cadets Paul, devised a wide game involving 403 Senior Scouts in 91 teams to be held in Ashridge Park, near Berkhamsted. It was from this event that the idea of a **Peak Assault Challenge** was born in 1968. The event was originally planned as a one off, but 52 years later it is still a must for teenagers and many adults who have become stewards or emergency personnel. At its height the event attracted over 1000 contestants. Amongst other achievements (Roy's Unit won Peak Assault several times) the Unit won the Devises – Westminster Canoe Race and one of the Unit, Andrew Wakelin became the World Hang-Gliding Champion. When girls were allowed to join Scouting, Roy's Unit was one of the first in Hertfordshire to accept them. Roy received the Silver Wolf on 6 September 2000 and was joined by **Ray Chambers ACC (Scouts)** for the presentation, exceptionally held on Brownsea Island. Roy's funeral has been postponed due to the Coronavirus outbreak.

**Wirral Council includes the site of the Third World Jamboree that was held at Arrowe Park in 1929** at Birkenhead. The Council are creating a Regeneration and History Project about the area and I have been asked to help with a display about the Jamboree. I have agreed to help and will be setting up a meeting. Hertfordshire sent a contingent of 200 to this Jamboree (their largest ever to any Jamboree) and the event also coincided with the 21<sup>st</sup> publication of *Scouting for Boys*. It was at this Jamboree where **B-P** was presented with a Rolls Royce Motor Car - Jam Roll, the caravan “Eccles” that is now sited at Gilwell Park and some other items. Hertfordshire Archives hold several items of historical interest about the event including a hand written Logbook. This was compiled by **David Bickerton** of the Fourth St Albans Troop. Please let me know if you would like a document I compiled about this Jamboree. The Leaders of the Troop were **Commander Kent ACC**. He was assisted by **George (Jim) Dymoke Green** and the **Revd. Ernest Scott**. Subject to Coronavirus restrictions I am arranging to visit the Manager of Parks, Coast and Countryside in the near future to discuss this project in more detail.

**FRANK BRITTAIN Archivist & Historian, Hertfordshire Scouts.**