



4th Worcester Park Scout Group

Friends of the Fourth

Newsletter

Summer Edition 2010

No. 25

Editorial

Many changes have taken place at the Braemar Road Headquarters over recent months, including new gas heating for both the main hall and the Apeldoorn building, and some vegetable plots in front of the Crew Den. The camp fire circle has been tidied up, and some necessary tree work has taken place on the field. The old Gang Show store has had a facelift as well! Those who are attending our Reunion Lunch in September will be able to see all this for themselves, and we would encourage you to join us - more details below.

Reunion Lunch

The Reunion Lunch is being held on Saturday 18th September from 1.00pm to 4.00pm. We are pleased to say that in response to members' requests, the lunch will go ahead at the H.Q. We now have 24 acceptances and will be pleased to receive further requests to attend up to the 4th September - cost £10 includes reception drink, lunch with wine and a farewell cup of tea or coffee - spouses are very welcome. Limited car parking will be available.

You might like to join the following among those attending - Richard Duck, John Pryke, Jon Jefferis, Jessie English, Arthur Simpson, John Terry, Dennis Wheaton, Bob Prescott, Andrew Colquhoun, John Humberstone, Peter West, Andrew Sheerman-Chase and Chris Parry.

News from the Group

The Scout Fellowship is being phased out nationally, and is being replaced by a section to be known as "Scout Active Support". This is obviously going to affect the Group, as we have one of the largest Group-attached Scout Fellowships in the County. Scout Active Support units will need to have a warranted leader - a departure from the traditions of Scout Fellowships. In the Fourth, Chris Vickers, who has transferred with Kat (his fiancée) from Wimbledon District, is helping Purple Scout Troop as an Assistant Leader. He has also taken the lead in a younger Group Active Support unit with an interest in offroading in 4x4s. This unit is based at the Fourth, and Chris has taken the lead on all Scout Active Support activities in the Group. In essence, the former Group Fellowship will continue to run as it always has, with Mary Root as the current Chairman, but with Chris as the warranted leader overseeing matters.

Brian Yearley

We are delighted to report that at a recent Scouts' Own, the County Commissioner presented Brian with the Silver Acorn in recognition of his services to Scouting. After passing through the sections of the Group and becoming a Queen's Scout, Brian served as AVSL and VSL before becoming the Group Quartermaster for very many years. He is now active in Scouting in Somerset. In addition to his involvement with the Group, Brian was a member of the War Office Rover Crew and of the Queen's Scout working party at the Windsor Castle annual St. George's Day Parade.

News from Members

We've had several letters and e-mails from members since our last newsletter, but by far and away the most amazing correspondence was between **Richard Duck** and **Stephen Root**, with the Friends of the Fourth acting as a post office. Richard and Stephen are a generation apart with Richard on the Isle of Wight and Stephen in Yorkshire. The story is quite complex but in essence, in the 1940's, Richard Duck's parents (in Worcester Park) knew Stephen Root's partner's (Judith's) grandparents (in Leeds) and as a consequence Richard was evacuated to Yorkshire in the War. Stephen's mum (Mary) and Judith's mum (Aileen) got chatting realising they both had known Richard Duck - Mary was in the same year at Cheam Common School, while Aileen knew Richard in the War when he had been evacuated to her parents' home. Stephen realised that Richard had a connection with the Fourth through the Friends of the

Fourth newsletters, and so contacted us. We then contacted Richard who told us that he had been in contact with Aileen and her family in the mid-60's but had then lost touch, but was thrilled to know that he now had an opportunity of re-establishing contact with Aileen via Stephen.

Richard then wrote to us saying: "I can sort of round up the story re Aileen. We have exchanged letters and photographs, but better than just corresponding, in June my wife and I are due to drive up to Alderley Edge where every year we do a "BOB-a-JOB" stint of house sitting on a smallholding for two of our oldest friends while they take a holiday from their B&B activities. We're kept busy looking after horses, one sheep, a couple of ducks, 30-odd chickens, two dogs, and two cats - it's very therapeutic. We were intending to drive across to Harrogate for a day. However, Aileen suggested that we stay over at the end of our house sitting duties and that's what we propose to do." Quite an amazing coincidence.

Richard also wrote saying: "I thought you might be interested to know that I have been communicating with various authorities during last few months in an effort to locate the site of my sister's grave in the grounds of St. Philips. I have many memories of church parades with, I believe, both the 2nd WP Cubs and the 4th WP Scouts. I was also a choirboy there for a short time, notably for letting the incense burner go out during the middle of a service on one occasion. Unfortunately with the passage of time since April 1945 my sister's gravestone has disappeared. However, with the help of the Rev. Charlotte Elvey of St. Philips Church we are close to a positive location."

Stephen also wrote: "Keep up the good work with the Newsletter. It's nice to see familiar names. I was intrigued to see the recent mention of **John Baldwin**. He was the first Akela of Charterhouse Pack of course - assisted by **Brian Homewood**, **Chris Secker** and myself - 33 years ago now which is rather frightening. **Carl Presswood** whose name I see and hear from time to time was one of our first cubs." *[Carl has recently become engaged and will be married to Victoria (Tory) in August - Editors]*

We've heard from two of our friends in Australia. Firstly, **Hugh Wiseman** writes: "I have only recently found the 4th website. What have I been missing all this time and how nostalgic it was to go back in time to see familiar names appearing in back editions. Like others, I have been sad to read of the passing of so many of my old friends gained during my association with the 4th.

I joined the cubs in 1949 and my pack soon came under the leadership of **Tom Quick**. Moving into scouts, being led at that time by **Fred Hadfield** and assisted by **Ron Kinton** in the early fifties, I became a member of the seagull patrol with **Roy Shenton** as patrol leader. Onwards and upwards to the dizzy heights of senior scouting with **Peter Kinton** at the helm. (**Brian Yearley** was there somewhere).

Later on, **John Humberstone** persuaded me to become his assistant when he moved into the area taking on the position of Rover Scout leader. The building of the den, and restoration work on the whaler were activities in which I participated. A lot of my learning and experience gained during my 15 year association with the group has been put to good use in other areas since.

November 1964 saw me go on a "two year holiday" to Australia. I am still here! I joined the Rover Crew in Whyalla, South Australia until I relocated to Sydney three years later. This new position involved me in being away from home for considerable periods of time and I therefore ceased my association with scouting, as I was unable to give the time and commitment it required. Whilst in Sydney, a couple of years later, I did reunite with John Humberstone during one of his visits but sadly due to circumstances existing at that time lost contact. It would be great to hear from John or any one else should they care to contact me. Retirement now looms which I find unattractive, but that's life."

Also from Australia, **Bob Searle** writes: "Thanks for the newsletter... It was good to read about **Dorothy Salter** - was only thinking about her recently, explaining to my wife that I still iron a shirt in the way that Akela taught me for a cub badge all those years ago. My sister Jean used to help with the cubs at about that time and now lives just down the road from us here in Fremantle. It's funny how after so many years so far apart we have ended up within a quarter of a mile of each other!"

We've heard from **Andrew Craton** who is undertaking chemotherapy. He feels very grateful for having a wonderful family supporting him during this time. The prognosis is good and Andrew hopes to continue his work with the Choir and is aiming to join them for the Christmas rehearsals starting in October. We wish him well.

Michael Wellman writes on the news of the death of Paul Dovey: "Paul and I were friends for many years during our time at the 4th. Paul started his Scouting as a Wolf Cub in 'B' Pack with **Tom Quick** as

Cubmaster at about the same time as me. At the time 'B' Pack met at Cheam Common School and **Eric Daniels** [Danny] was Tom's assistant. We were both sixers at the same time and later, in the Troop, I was Paul's second in the Seagull patrol. Paul also came with me on my 1st class hike, where we started at Tattenham Corner station and went via Walton on the Hill, Box Hill, Mickleham Church and camped on a farm on the other side of the Mole Valley where we were woken at 5.00am by the cows being brought in for milking. We successfully made a raft with old tractor tyres, drums and planks of wood and floated it on the Mole. I'm not sure what 'elf and safety' would make of 2 x 13year old boys doing that now! Like Paul, I also was a Cub Instructor with 'B' Pack for a number of years. We were also together in the Senior Scout Troop and the Rover Crew. Paul would have been 67 I believe this year so a young age to go, like **Chris Pardoe**, **Barrie Spelling** and **Chris Willis** before him in recent years. However, ours were happy days with the 4th.

We've also heard again from **Maurice Wilkins**. He writes: "We are both keeping well and continuing to keep fit, cycling and "thespianising". Cycling tours last year took us to Slovenia and France. We performed, made scenery and costumed "My Fair Lady" and non cycling activities took us down the Norwegian coast and a variety of locations in the UK. Family commitments and routine house maintenance kept the rest of the year full. All pretty routine really.

Although my cancer fear appears to be completely in the past they still have me in each year to check me over and everything remains negative. However, I am due to go into hospital to repair a torn shoulder tendon that has been troubling me for 18 months so that'll keep me off the bike for a little while. Rita is also due to go in to have the anterior ligament in her knee repaired, a throw back from when she broke it four years ago when they didn't repair it properly. Please remember us to all our old friends in the Fourth and as always, if anybody is down this way we'll always be glad to see them, the kettle is always on.....that's if we're in!"

The Senior Scout Camp at Polyapes, 1953, by John Pryke

It must have been in May 1953, when a representative group from the 4th Worcester Park Seniors attended a Meet of Surrey Seniors at a place I have only ever known as Polyapes. In later years I don't think I ever succeeded in finding out where, exactly, this place was, but I suspect that it may have been a play on words - poly / apes = many monkeys. It has, however, always been a bit special to me. *[The Polyapes Scout Campsite still exists and is used to this day. It is located between Oxshott and Stoke D'Abernon - we believe the name derives from Poly Apis as bees were kept there! Editors].*

We cycled there and pitched our tents. As with the Bizzibods Camp mentioned in a previous newsletter, I was camping with **John Snell**, **Don** and **Derek Golledge**, **Don Kurz** and other 4WP seniors. The site was well packed with hike tents of all sizes and colours and over to one side was a large marquee, which the organisers had commissioned as a refuge in case of any rain.

In one corner of the marquee was a refreshment station, manned - or more correctly - womanned by a party of Sea Rangers from Sutton. As can be imagined they were remarkably successful in selling their wares as dozens of youths queued up to chat them up. At least that is what we did! Whatever else went on during the weekend, the big communal event was a camp-fire. It was held inside the marquee in case of rain, but my recollection was that it was one of those late spring/early summer fine spells. The fire was smokeless. It was an electric bulb under some red crepe paper surrounded by wood kindling, and with an electric lead trailing across the ground to the generator humming away outside the marquee.

We arrived late as was the habit we seemed to have cultivated in those days. The marquee was packed, but there was something strange about the scene. There were blokes, ten or fifteen deep, ranged from the left hand side right round to the far right hand corner. Separated from the main crowd by a space of about twenty feet were the eight or so sea rangers - they were completely isolated!

We debated where we should sit and someone said to me, 'I bet you wouldn't dare to sit with the girls'. Well, what could I do? So we walked across to the girls with several hundred pairs of eyes watching us. Our reception by the girls was quite welcoming as we did know some of them who we had seen at socials and dances - either in Sutton or in Worcester Park. (As an aside, I don't know whether the same thing still happens today, but each troop used to invite others to support any social event they organised - and for dances, the opposite sex was always in demand! So Senior Scouts would be invited to Ranger Socials and vice versa.)

The camp fire was its usual enjoyable event even though the singing by the male teenagers left something to be desired. My friends and I basked in the evident jealousy displayed by many of those present! Well, that is it I suppose, except to say that the Sea Ranger I sat next to that evening is now my wife of over 50 years and as I can claim (and often do so) we not only cemented friendship between Scouting and Guiding, but I also won her in a bet!

John Humberstone writes...

We held over a story from John Humberstone from the last issue, owing to lack of space. Well, here’s an edited version:

“Joan and I, and Jacko our German Shepherd, visited Rhosseli in South Wales in our motor caravan - a beauty spot I last visited 65 years ago as a Queen’s Scout with the 81st North London - 2nd Finchley. We found a pitch close to a footpath leading along some cliffs, put Jacko on a lead and walked with him along the footpath. Others made a fuss of Jacko who is really lovely in spite of his chequered past as a rescue. When we returned hot and thirsty, I tethered Jacko to a post in shade under a tree and we sat in the back of the van drinking tea. Joan called me and said “Doesn’t he look a bit like Jacko?” I looked out and saw a large German Shepherd standing in the middle of a large white tablecloth alongside a Catholic Schools coach munching away at a plate of sausage rolls, surrounded by sandwiches, chicken legs, cakes, jellies - a veritable banquet. We burst out laughing and admitted it did look like Jacko - then we looked at each other - rushed to the door and there under the tree was Jacko’s lead and empty collar! As I ran towards the “riot”, two black robed Nuns and a dozen children were trying to shoo Jacko away, but he was gobbling away at the sausage rolls as though it was his last day in doggy land.

Jacko then ran off and disappeared, but the two Nuns were laughing! I apologised, but another Nun appeared who wasn’t so pleased. I explained that Jacko was rescued and had been badly treated, systematically starved, and in order to live had to steal food. I explained it might take time to wean him from the habit, and she started to smile. She picked up the last sausage roll saying “Give this to Jacko when he comes home and say we forgive him, I trust you will too.” I noticed all the remaining food had been covered in cling film, so the only damage was a dozen or so sausage rolls. Jacko returned after 20 minutes with a look which said “it wasn’t me guv”. He’s been with us for four years and only occasionally steals food if we leave any at eye level which to him is 6 feet when he stands on his hind legs!!!”

Coming Events

You are cordially invited to attend all of these:

Sat 3 July	12noon	Summer Fair	Sat 6 Nov	7.00pm	Fireworks Night
Sun 11 July	11.00am	Scouts' Own	Sat 13 Nov	2.30pm	Grand Auction
Sat 24 July	7.00pm	Live Music Event	Sat 27 Nov	12noon	Bazaar
Sat 2 Oct	2.30pm	Jumble Sale	Sun 12 Dec	5.00pm	Scouts' Own
Sun 10 Oct	11.00am	Scouts' Own	Fri 24 Dec	7.30pm	Christmas Eve Service
Sat 23 Oct	6.30pm	Casino Night			

It’s Your Newsletter...

Please write to either of us with contributions or news, or e-mail on: fotf@4wp.org.uk

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