

50th Old Scout Reunion Report

In an effort to find some new way to express my feelings about the Reunion's, perhaps I may vandalise a passage from Henry V in this way;

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers for those that shared a toast with us last Friday shall be our brothers: And Diehardians elsewhere in England shall sorrow that they were not there to drink with us on Diehards Day".

It was a superb evening, the venue well chosen, the food as good as we have ever had and the bar well stocked although I understand that the orange juice was a bit pricey!

Once seated, the toasts came thick and fast including a toast of appreciation to Jack and George who between them have 99 Reunions to their credit.

The Chief Scout asked the company to remain seated whilst he stood and drunk to our health, a nice gesture I thought.

Our formal toasts first to the Queen and then to the Chief Scout and the movement, the latter having a very special significance since our Chief was with us. Then followed the toast to our founder, when we remember the leadership and inspiration that Les brought to the 8th. After the break we returned for the toast to absent friends, after which the Roll of Honour was called. The Chief Scout led us in the re-newal of the Scout Promise and this very moving and important period of the evening was concluded by the singing of the Scout Hymn.

Now it was time for the speeches. A big cheer greeted John Sherry as he rose to propose a toast to "Our Guests". John welcomed them and told us that some of them had even paid to attend--heckles suggested they be offered our sincere apologies!

John made particular mention of guests Ian Harley, the DC and Ron Mayer from Scout HQ. He spoke to of our founders influence in forming the Old Scouts and said he was proud to be present at this 50th Reunion.

He told us a story of Adam & Eve, justifying the talk by saying that he was reminiscing-but surely he couldn't have been around then!

John then turned his attention to the Chief Scout-he asked us the question "Was he qualified for the job?" I got the feeling that John had a hand in his selection but I'm sure I must have been mistaken!

He then told us something of Major General Walsh's life and career-he had researched this so well that there isn't space to include all that he had to say but it is interesting to note that our Chief was a Kings Scout with Gold Cords, that he joined the army in 1945 as a private and that he held Command and staff appointments in both the UK and Europe. He is said John, a devotee of the Arts and a keen sportsman, a flier, a sailor and a parachutist. He was appointed Chief Scout in 1982.

John told us that protocol had been ignored to persuade the Chief Scout to be with us and thanked Ron Mayer for his influence which was undoubtedly helpful. John, a chap to whom Diehardia owes much sat to much deserved applause.

The Chief Scout then rose to reply indicating a keen sense of humour by admitting that his secretary had pencilled in his diary opposite his engagement with us the words "Rough night".

He thanked us on behalf of fellow guests for the invitation to the Reunion which he termed a great occasion showing the strength of Diehard organisation.

The Chief Scout referred to the Windsor St. Georges Day Parade, 1000 to 1150 Queens Scouts will attend he said, 30% of which would be girls. He called the Parade a day to remember and regretted that he was prevented his attendance as a Kings Scout. He called these fine young men and women the seed corn of the future.

He said it was a humbling experience to adopt the mantle of B.P. and told a story illustrating the pitfalls of being a VIP.

He said that he had visited 113 countries in his years of office and although he recognised that folk would produce a good performance for a Chief Scout, he was aware that people were trying harder, for, he continued, the movement does need a shake-up and we need to pull up our socks. Young people today need more excitement and we must provide it for the young are our future. He called for us to find the leaders to lead the young in Diehardia.

As he sat, the Old Scouts rose to give him a standing ovation. His speech had been both interesting and entertaining and he came across as a man with a keen sense of humour, deeply caring about Scouts and a real man's man, one whom we should be grateful to have as our Chief.

When the applause had died down John presented the Chief Scout with a Group Tie which he promptly put on. Also presented to him was the original artwork for the menu cover which had been nicely framed by John.

Len Clark was then given the opportunity to say a few words. Always worth listening to is Len and he was given the usual rowdy welcome. Len concerned himself with the problems which now beset the Group, pointing out that we should not like to see a takeover, which stunned me somewhat and pointed out that we did not have school or church connections to help. He paid tribute to Fred Judson who has worked so hard over the past years and called for help to improve the situation. Len sat down to the generous applause he always deserves.

Then, another unscheduled spot, a presentation of 2 framed line drawings of a 1929 Boy Scout to Jack and George in recognition of their services to the 8th. Both responded to the calls of "Speech" and they got the second standing ovation of the evening.

My turn then to propose the toast to the Group. I left the theme of my speech to thank the Chief Scout for his attendance and I hope paid adequate tribute to the efforts of Fred Judson, Susan Gibbs, George Mc Sweeney and Paul Williamson.

I listed the considerable achievements of our small troop and pack, a list which many Group's, three times our size would be proud of. So, we've got the quality—we just need a bit more on the quantity side of things. I then had the honour of handing over a cheque to the Group, this being the result of the Christmas Appeal.

Bill Brooks then replied for the Group, referring to the DC's concern with our low numbers and contrasted our present strength with the numbers he knew in the past. Bill said how much he had regretted the passing of the Rovers. He spoke too of the loss of Harry and David Barrett and

again Fred's efforts were recognised. He said that we must be prepared to fight for the 8th. He thanked the Branch for the Christmas Appeal cash and was able to report that HQ was in good nick and the financial position sound but he added, "What is a group without boys ?." He ended with a talk about dodgy fish and chips and Alka-Seltzer before sitting to a roar of applause.

Len Lawrence then rose to propose the health of our evenings retiring chairman. He had certainly done his homework and listed John's scouting career which was indeed very impressive. Len told how John had been awarded the Leaping Wolf, The Anderson Shield, Scout Cords, Dick James Trophy, was a Queens Scout and an ASL at twenty-one, then an SL and now running the 2nd Henel Hempstead Group. Len then tol us of his career as a photographer and his recent hospitalisation. He seemed to have a humorous story for all aspects of John's life so we enjoyed stories of photographers, cricketers, hospitals and good nature. He had the audience in hysterics. Finally, he paid tribute to John's year as Chairman and sat to well deserved applause.

John overcame the problem of introducing himself by producing a life-size photographic cut out of himself which took the Chairman's chair whilst he stepped aside to introduce himself. John said that it was an honour to have taken up LJK's chair and suggested that we might take a leaf out of Les' book and drag in anyone who shows an inclination to help. He told us a tale of his underwater experiences and thanked us for coming to his 'party'.

A very popular Chairman whose efforts over the past year were acknowledged by enthusiastic applause. John then handed over the Symbols of Office to Len Lawrence, our Chairman for 84/85. Len thanked John and said that he hoped we would all come to his party next year.

So, ended the evening-I met folk I had not seen for years and I hope that in future they will come more often. May I end by appealing again to any of you who could give an hour or so now ang again to help the Boys of the Eighth, to come forward now when you will find your help very welcome.

LES LAWRENCE

Reunion Attendance

It was encouraging to have such a good turn-out for our 50th Reunion and here is a list of those who attended:

Guests: The Chief Scout, Len Clark, Ron Meyer, Richard Ellison(89th Reading GSL), Stan Lewis, Nigel Crump, Harold Bonnett, John Evans, John Maguire, Colin Rennie, Tim Mitchell, Colin Nethercoat, Ken Flack, Tony Frazer-Cann, Ian Harley, Garry Gilling and Derek Hill.

Old Scouts: Jim O'Connell, Les Lawrence, Martin Aldred, Steve Hardie, Chips Wood, Clive Wood, Roy Porritt, George Scott, Roger Scott, Cyril Simmons, Roy Goodship, John Morrison, John Larkin, Fred Wagstaff, Jack Evans, Brian Barrett, David Eatwell, John Brookes, Brian Finlayson

Tom Slade, Ron Slade, Peter Larkin, Bob Larkin, Chris Amies, Alan Barney, Chris Robinson, Tony Thomas, Peter Nolde, Paul Bremner, Keith Hardie, Del James, Don Hart, Nigel Hart, Mike Kilcooley, Tony Leboff, Stan Cooke, Tom Barrett, Phil Quinn, Phil Peeling, Bill Barker, Rob Robinson, Len Lawrence, John Cuthbert, Alf Cook, Charles Joby, Terence Morder, Ron Wisbey, Phil Lomax, Derek Trolope, John Sherry, Doug Jenner, Martin Foster, Bill Brooks, Ron Barker, Harry Travis, Cliff Jordan.

Active Members: Fred Judson, Ian Judson and Paul Williamson.

A Letter From The Chief Scout

Following our splendid evening at the Clarendon Court Hotel we received, through John Larkin this thank you from our Chief Scout;

"What a splendid evening you and the "Dichards" gave your Chief Scout last week at the Clarendon Court Hotel. I know I also speak for Ron Meyer for we both enjoyed ourselves greatly in your company. I would be grateful if you could pass on my thanks and appreciation to all those involved in the organisation of the dinner and to all members for their kindness and hospitality. I particularly enjoyed meeting your father--there are not many still serving who "pulled a trek cart to Waterloo Station".

Finally, thank you for all you are doing for Scouting now in Hertfordshire and I look forward to seeing you later in the year.

Yours Sincerely,

Michael Walsh (Chief Scout).

Future Events

Summer Fair-June 9th at 3'0 Clock

Boys and parents, please send along goods for our Fair Stall. Tinned goods, bottled goods, any unwanted presents that have been hidden away unwanted. It all makes money for the training of the boys.

Thank You,

Rose Barrett.

I would also like to point out that two of last years popular events, the Cricket Match and the leg rally will also be happening but we have no actual date set for either at the time of this Dichard going to press. Further news will be given, as and when we know.