

JOHN YERBURY...

JOHN YERBURY JOINED 4TH SOUTHALL (VILLIERS) GROUP AS A SCOUT AND BECAME ASSISTANT SCOUT MASTER IN 1942. HE WAS CALLED UP FOR NATIONAL SERVICE AND JOINED THE ROVER CREW IN RAF YATESBURY WHERE HE BECAME ASSISTANT ROVER SCOUT LEADER.

Returning to Southall he became Scout Master of 4th Southall in 1949, a position he held until 1968. He completed his Wood Badge training at Gilwell Park and this convinced him that the Scout method was correct. From then on he ran a Troop night every week – we never closed for the holidays – and two-week Summer Camps, which he believed to be the culmination of the year's training, held as far apart as Guernsey and the Lake District.

He insisted on high standards and was determined to make the Patrol System work. We often travelled to camp by train and in open-topped lorries (before the advent of Health and Safety Regulations!) and the range of activities left no one the time to be homesick. His Scouts always returned tired but happy. Despite his belief in traditional Scouting John was ready to embrace new ideas. We were always trying out new methods of cooking with different fuels – we used charcoal, sawdust and compressed paper at various times – and having seen Dexion Angle used industrially we took it to camp for latrine frames, altar fires and countless other uses.

In 1968 he was invited to become District Commissioner for Southall. He accepted this post out of a sense of duty but it took him further away from the job he loved doing. After moving from Southall he became Assistant District Commissioner (Leader Training) for Ruislip in 1978 – a job he preferred because it enabled him to pass on some of his experience directly to Leaders, and to help at Scout training courses where he, once again, could become directly involved with the boys.

Following retirement he moved to Hathersage, in Derbyshire, in 1988. He thought that his Scouting days were over but he had not reckoned with the Scout telegraph.

Shortly after arriving there he was again invited to become Assistant District Commissioner (Leader Training) and he spent several happy years passing on his wealth of experience. He was also the visiting Commissioner for Groups camping in the area. This was another role that he relished as it enabled him to visit Scouts in camp and acquire new ideas that he could then feed on to others.

Many hundreds of people must have benefited from John's knowledge, experience, enthusiasm and sense of fun, and all this time he was supported magnificently by his wife Beryl. To her, and to his daughters Wendy and Sally, we extend our deepest sympathy.

It is customary at this point to say 'Rest in Peace' but it is certain that John will not be resting. He will already have taught St Peter a new knot, will have mended the gate, probably using a new variation of the square lashing that he read about in 'Scouting' magazine, will have developed a new form of solar heating to make a cup of tea and will now be leading a rousing chorus of a camp fire song! On behalf of the many people whose lives have been made better by contact with John may I simply say 'Thanks, Skip – you were great.'