



SEPTEMBER 1991 No. 366

THE OFFICIAL BULLETIN  
OF LETCHWORTH AND BALDOCK  
DISTRICT SCOUT COUNCIL

JIM BRUCE 1918 - 1991

In Fond Memory Of My Uncle

I lost my Uncle and my friend today and I am sad about this, Jim Bruce was part of my life and will certainly be remembered as an active participant in the community life of Letchworth.

Jim was like Peter Pan and loved life and dedicated most of his adult years to providing fun and laughter to "kids" from nine to ninety.

My early memories of Jim go back to the early fifties when he produced the pantomime Jack & The Beanstalk at St. Francis theatre on The Broadway in Letchworth.

Jim & I spent many happy years together as members of the Scout Association and he had a tremendous impact on my life and played a large role in shaping my character for my adult life.

My wife Gwen & myself were so delighted that Jim was able to visit us in Australia about four years ago. He arrived in not the very best of health and it was so rewarding for us to send him back to Letchworth looking fit and tanned and a great advertisement for the Australian sunshine. Typical of the man Jim made many friends during his fleeting visit and along with my wife and myself they send there sympathy to Jim's family.

I will miss my Uncle and my friend and want to thank him for the love and care he gave to me and many others during his remarkable lifetime. I also wish at this time to thank those wonderful friends who provided Jim with their love and affection during his recent illness.

Jim keep "Scouting" and in time we shall all once again "Be Riding Along On The Crest Of A Wave"

Our fondest love. Bill , Gwen , Janet, Andrew, Scott and Charlie

Bill Bruce  
2 Dalmonte Grove  
KALLISTA  
Victoria 3791  
Australia

That was quite a gathering at St Thomas's on that brilliant Thursday afternoon. Old friends and colleagues, and some of us who hadn't seen each other for years, were there to honour a great man. We shared the sadness of the occasion, but we all shared the joy of having known Jim Bruce.

As John Hilditch said in his admirable address, we each had our own memories of adventures with Jim. Some of my most vivid ones are of the summer of 1957, when we set out to walk to the Jubilee Jamboree at Sutton Coldfield, from which Jim was to be a hike leader, taking an international party of Rover Scouts up Cader Idris. And this was a man who had nearly been left for dead in the Saint-Nazaire Commando raid fifteen years earlier.

Officially, it was the Jamboree (for Scouts), Indaba (for Scouters) and Moot (for Rovers), or J.I.M. for short - which gave our effort the name of the Jim Jim Jaunt. In fact, it was so hot that we did much of the trip on local buses, one of which brought us to Coventry, and the site for the new Cathedral. Jim thought then that we ought to find some way to bring the District's Senior Scouts there when the Cathedral was finished...

And five years later, the thought became reality as Jim's Mystery Tour, a never-to-be-repeated adventure for all those who dared to take part and indeed solved the clues that led them to Coventry. But it was repeated, to Peterborough in 1964, Broadstone Warren in 1966, Norwich in 1968, Reading in 1974 and Youlbury in 1976.

Jim "retired" from this great game after JMT6, and the District presented him with the famous walking stick blazoned with the names of all the Mystery Tours. But (in this sense) Jim was not a retiring type, and another little shield was added to the stick at West Dean in 1977. He "retired" again in April 1978, with a memorable reunion of survivors of JMT who all signed the book recounting its history. And later that year he was at Bury St Edmunds for JMT8.

Next year, after treatment for the cancer in his leg, he marked his sixty first birthday with a 200 mile sponsored walk from Land's End in aid of St Mark's Hospital Research Foundation. In 1980 there was JMT9 at Chelmsford; in 1984, JMT10 at St Neots. In between, he spent his sixty fourth birthday strolling around the city of Londonderry, where he'd come with me to make sure I didn't get into any trouble:

Jim retired from Scouting several more times after that, but we asked so much of him, because he had so much to give. Nothing could keep him away from First Baldock camps and troop meetings. Even when in Lister Hospital this summer, he remembered his promise to a Cub Scout whom he prepared for investiture seven years ago: "I'll be there to see you get your Chief Scout's Awards" And so (with Eric's help) he was.

He got better enough to come home, and our next expedition together was to the Bursland shop with the wheelchair he secretly loathed but laughingly called his "pram". As always, Jim joked about his problems and faced death fearlessly as he had done more than once before; and this time he accepted it gracefully.

---

Helen and James have left with me, until we decide the best place to keep them permanently, the Jim's Mystery Tour book and the walking stick, which anyone may come and inspect at 80 Spring Road. I also have the JMT trophy, that shiny dish, not actually silver but more valuable than gold, awaiting the new competition that we must concoct for this District and perhaps neighbouring Districts as well, to keep alive the adventure and fun that Jim offered to us all.

Ken Johnson

#### DISTRICT SWIMMING GALA 1991.

The event was held at Letchworth Open Air Pool on 15th. July. The weather was favourable and although organised by the District Fellowship they were ably assisted by other people. The event was well supported by the Cub Scouts but the Scout teams were thin on the ground. The raffle was well supported and we are given to understand that the proceeds will be used to assist the new assault course at Nortonbury. Any monies left over from the Fellowship account will also be used for the same project.

The Trophies were won by :-

Cub Scouts	- 8th. Dorians.
Scouts	- Tie 1st.3rd. and 1st. Baldock.
Group	- 1st. Baldock.

Laurie Cook.  
District Fellowship.

#### COLLECTION AT TESCO STORES.

Once again Tesco Stores PLC is allowing the Scout Association to collect money at their Baldock store on 20th. and 21st. September. No more than two adults will be permitted at a time. 50% of the takings will go to the Scout Association and the remainder to the collectors. If any Group would like to take this opportunity to raise funds would they please contact me as soon as possible so that a rota can be drawn up.

#### GIRLS IN SCOUTING.

7th. Letchworth have decided to allow girls into membership of their Scout Troop after consultation with all interested parties. Kelly Kenworthy became the first Girl Scout in our District when she was invested by the District Commissioner. John Wright the Group Chairman, presented Kelly with a plaque to commemorate the occasion.

#### WELCOME TO NEW GSL's.

I am pleased to announce the appointments of Keith Goodman as GSL at 12th. Letchworth and Rob Hemmings at 1st. Baldock. We welcome them to the District and wish them success with their Groups.

#### DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS MEETING - 3rd. OCTOBER.

All members of Scout Executive Committees and other lay helpers are welcome to attend this meeting. They will be able to meet members of the District Executive and District Team who will keep them up to date with Scouting in the District. The evening also provides an opportunity to share experiences in running a Scout Group with members of other Groups.

DISTRICT DIARYSEPTEMBER

9th. Cub Leaders Meeting.  
12th. District Executive.  
20/21st Collection at Tesco Stores.  
25th. District Team.  
26th. Scout Leaders.  
28th. Beaver Sports.

OCTOBER

3rd. District Administrators Meeting - Nortonbury.  
10th. District Executive.