



**N  
e  
w  
s  
l  
e  
t  
t  
e  
r**

# Our new DC's Slot

## Rob Freake – DC – A pen portrait

Scouting has always been in my blood. Both my parents and grandparents had been leaders in the Wolf Cubs in London years before I was even a twinkle.

My own Scouting career began at age 9 when I reached the top of the waiting list and got a place at 6<sup>th</sup> Chelmsford (Cathedral) Cubs Scouting. I progressed to Scouts at 2<sup>nd</sup> Chelmsford (Springfield) and then to Venture Scouts at Spartan VSU. During this time I took out an ACSL's warrant at 18, gained the Queen's Scout Award and D of E Gold and represented Essex at the 1983 XV World Jamboree in Alberta, Canada.

I performed in the Chelmsford Gang Show in 1982,3 & 4 before University took me away to Manchester, where I ran the Argonaut Venture Scout Unit in Didsbury.

On returning to Chelmsford I took on the role of ASL, again in Springfield, before moving to Boreham where I progressed from ASL to SL and latterly GSL.

Outside the Group I spent several years as part of the County Training Team, have been on the staff of several Essex Jamborees including roles of Sub Camp Leader and Deputy of the International Team. As well as enjoying more formal singing I am a keen campfire leader.

I met my wife Kathryn, a former Guider, on the EJ staff in 1988. We have been married for nearly 16 years and have two boys, currently a PL and a Sixer.

# District Chairman

## Barry Cousins

Has reluctantly agreed to be nominated by the DC for the post of District Chairman after having offered to help with the merger process. Many of you will know Barry as a former County Commissioner and those with longer memories when he was DC for the East Essex District and before that as Warden of Prances. Barry says that he is willing to take on the role of Chairman for a limited period, although recognising that the DC can bring in a replacement at any subsequent AGM, in the interests of helping the DC to provide solid support for Scout Groups and the young people. Barry will clock up 48 years adult service in the Movement this month and for the time being will continue in his other role of County Secretary.

\*\*\*\*\*

# District Secretary

**Madeleine Flowers, District Secretary, Maldon & East Essex District, introducing myself to the new district:**

I live in Feering and I've been here some 40 years having moved away from Chingford in London. In my younger days I was a Brownie, Girl Guide and Sea Ranger in Chingford. I worked in London for a few years, and then married and started a family. I had 5 children and they were then my full-time job!

I first became involved in Scouting when my son joined as a Cub in about 1968, and I found myself involved with the fund-raising committee of the then 1<sup>st</sup> Kelvedon Scout Group. Some 2 or 3 years later, when an appeal was made

at a Girl Guide function for someone to start a new Brownie Pack I somehow found myself being volunteered by my daughters, with the result that I started up a new pack, became a Brown Owl, and ran the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kelvedon Brownie Pack for about 10 enjoyable years.

Having accomplished 10 years service with the Pack I decided it was time to stand down and concentrate more on my home and job. However, that decision was short-lived as the DC at the time, Vic Coles, thought I had lots of spare time on my hands so he was rather persuasive in getting me to take over as Group Scout Leader with 1<sup>st</sup> Kelvedon, now Kelvedon & Feering Scout Group! Consequently I was GSL from 1979 to 1985.

Having left the group at the end of 1985 I found myself still unable to escape from Scouting, as I became a member of the District Appointments committee. In 1991 I had was appointed ADC, Scout Fellowship for about a year. Unfortunately I wasn't really suited to this role, and reluctantly I resigned. As usual there was another job to do in the District and from then on I put together and distributed the District Newsletter for about 12 years.

I became District Secretary for East Essex in March 2003, and continued in this role until the District closure this year. I thought that the closure was a good opportunity for me to retire from Scouting for good, but I thought better of my decision and am very happy to play a role in the new District, at least for a year while things settle down!



# District Treasurer

Mike Hopper has taken on the responsibility of the new District Treasurer. Mike has also had many years of experience in Scouting; among these are Cub Scout Leader, Assistant Venture Leader with 1<sup>st</sup> Maldon and a member of ESMAT.

**More about Mike in the next edition: -  
Ed.**

=====

## DC's Vision

### What should our District be?

Scouting is a game. No new sentiment there, but how do we make sure it is a good game?

Games must be fun, and so should Scouting be. It need not be trivial or lightweight, and it certainly must not be reckless, but it should not be a chore either.

Much of the fun and reward comes from interaction with others, and the sharing of experiences.

I believe that the secret is teamwork.

### Scouting is made up of teams:

- Young people are in lodges, sixes and patrols, these in sections
- Sections have leader teams.
- The family unit of the Group is another team. This team includes lay people as well as uniformed Scouters.
- The District has a team, but within it there are also teams dealing with specific section issues, individual projects, adult appointment and development and many more.

For any team to function effectively it must have a common understanding of the target it is aiming for. It is true of each and every team throughout the movement. The District is no exception.

As DC I am responsible for identifying the target for the District. I call it a vision:

### My vision is that

“Maldon and East Essex District will be a model for how Scouting should be delivered at the start of its second century.”

I believe that Maldon and East Essex District should be a financially solid, properly resourced and modern District offering appropriate support to Groups and sections so that the best possible 21<sup>st</sup> century Scouting opportunity is available to young people throughout the District.

### How will I achieve this?

- It is not my style to change things for the sake of doing so. I freely acknowledge that there is generally a natural resistance to change and so avoid change for its own sake.
- if something works, let it continue, support and encourage it.
- if not reshape or replace it.
- I will not be afraid to discontinue activities that are poorly supported or not relevant to current needs, but I do not believe that I hold any monopoly view on what is good or bad, my aim is to lead not to bully.

### How will we know that something is good?

Whilst you can use raw statistics and measure scouting by the number of members the truth goes deeper. If the quality of Scouting is high the young people will draw their friends into what they are doing and recruitment will be spontaneous rather than a deliberate act.

The best advertisement for Scouting are our members, our best recruiters are the youngsters themselves. Scouting is about developing individuals to be the best they can. Whilst a bit of hard work along the way is fair enough there are plenty of fun ways to learn and these should be the mainstay. If Scouting is boring we are doing it wrong and we have no right to expect the youngsters to come, let alone sell it to their friends.

This means that organic growth is the best indicator of quality but to improve the quality

of Scouting we can offer we need the resources, both equipment and, more importantly people. The right people doing the right job with the right support.

So it is my belief that the effective recruitment and retention of adults will raise the quality of Scouting. The enthusiasm of the young people will fuel the success.

It is common to look at those within Scouting when looking to fill a post – in my own experience I have suffered by following a seemingly obvious progression into the wrong role. Every appointment must work for the person as well as filling a need or they will not give of their best.

In order to increase the adult contribution we need to bring in new blood, not squeeze ever more out of the adults we have. Adults need to enjoy Scouting too, after all it is their enthusiasm that will light the touch paper in the young people.

When I first considered the role of DC of this District I completed a SWOT analysis – identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the success of the new district and the achievement of my vision.

I have selected a few of those initial observations to share with you:

### **SWOT Analysis**

#### **Strengths:**

- The depth and breadth of experience available within the existing District teams that can be harnessed to support the District Vision.
- The enthusiasm of the young people that deserves to be encouraged.
- Newfound critical mass – belonging to something big

enough to set challenging goals and achieve them.

- The existing history and traditions – the foundations on which we can build.
- We are fortunate to have a great potential but somewhat under exploited resource in the District Scout Fellowship. I see the Scout Fellowship as having a substantial role to play in backing up leaders in the delivery of programmes.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Geography – the difficulties associated with moving around and the lack of a single geographic focus or identity.

#### **Opportunities:**

- A chance to review existing structures, methods, personnel and activities - to identify, keep and strengthen what is good and revise or replace anything that is not working as it should
- A chance to reassess individual roles and reassign people to more appropriate ones hence making best use of their skills and the time they have available – the appointment review process is a powerful and positive tool and needs to be used effectively

#### **Threats:**

- Lack of courage to see changes through – the risk of doing half a job.

So the strength is there to harness, the opportunities there to grasp but what of the difficulties.

The geography is a fact and is not going to change, so we need to look at how we work within it rather than battling against it.

I plan to split the District into three portions, the Dengie Peninsular, The Estuary and the inland transport corridor – I am looking for a better name so would welcome any suggestions. On a day-to-day basis Sections and Groups within each portion will work as a team to mutually support each other, facilitated by District Section and Group Scouters. The ADC team will coordinate and support through these District Scouters. This will allow initial local support with central back up available when required.

Whilst meetings are unavoidable modern communications allow many things to be dealt with without the need for so much travel. This has a variety of benefits from cutting down on car emissions to leaving people time to do things instead of wasting it travelling. When travel is essential lets us always consider sharing lifts and changing venues so that the same people are not always faced with the journey. In short we need to challenge how we achieve not compromise what we achieve. I am open to suggestions – I have no monopoly on good ideas.

Our biggest challenge is, I believe, to see things through; to realise the full potential not take only the easy wins and then stop. It will not always be easy but I really do believe that it will be worth it.

**Team**

I am sure that you are keen to know the team that will help me to make my vision a reality. Unfortunately it is not complete but I will gladly share what I have so far. I must stress that all these appointments are provisional until approved by the District Appointment Sub Committee and subject to CRB clearance in the usual way:

I still have vacancies for ADC Beavers and Scouts and there may well be other roles in due course.



Scouts from across the District marched through Maldon to celebrate St George's Day.

What a lovely afternoon we all had especially as this was the first public event of the new District. The turnout was over 150. Beaver Scouts, Cub Scouts, Scouts, Explorer Scouts Leaders and Friends from Hatfield Peverel, Kelvedon, Tiptree, Tillingham and Maldon enjoyed the weather which was wonderfully warm making new friends and in some cases meeting some slightly older ones. The public came out of the shops and houses to witness the parade as it progressed from the Maldon promenade through the High Street and into All Saints Church for the Service, where we all re-affirmed our promises as all Scouts do all over the world on this special day. During the Service the new District's Chaplin Rev. Simon Garwood was duly Invested into the Scouting Movement Our sincere thanks to the local Police who managed to close the High Street ensuring a safe passage.

If anyone has any photos please let me have some in order that we may start a photo gallery on the District Web Page.

++++  
**If anyone has any news from your Group / Section / Stories / News/ Dates or anything of interest please email me...The newsletter is for your news.....Ed.**



