

Jeremy Whitton Salter

30 August 1941 – 25 May 2015

Jeremy ('Jem') Salter was actively involved in scouting as an adult since 1959 and first held a warranted appointment in 1960, then held warranted roles continuously until 1989, since which time his positions were on the lay side but Jem has probably been no less active for that.

Jem has given a lifetime of dedicated and selfless service to scouting. Primarily this has been to the 1st Claygate Group, which he joined in March 1970 as Group Scout Leader, at the invitation of Tom Barnfield, who had led the group until that time. As Group Scout Leader, Jem's strength was in recruiting and supporting the section leaders. In the early years of his tenure the cub pack split into two, and then three, and the troop divided as well, enabling many more boys to participate. None would have been possible without all those leaders and helpers to run the sections and provide other background support. Jem also led the reinstating of the Group Show every three years. The headquarters (then in Station Road) was extended to accommodate the meetings and storage of extra equipment. Then, having been a highly active and respected Group Scout Leader for 15 years, he stepped down in 1985.

From 1984 Jem continued as an Assistant Scout Leader. The troop was hard pressed at this time for leaders and Jem's experience was put to good use on a weekly basis at regular meetings and other activities such as summer camp. Being closer in many ways to the troop as an ASL Jem was able to subtly but effectively use his skills and knowledge to ensure a new Scout Leader was in position with a team of adult helpers and assistants with numbers so large that the troop was split in two and run on two separate evenings.

Having helped secure the stability of the troop Jem stood down as ASL in 1989 and put his accountancy skills to good use by becoming Group Treasurer between 1989 and 1993. 1st Claygate Group had become one of the biggest in the County if not the UK and as such its financial affairs were weighty. Jem's financial stewardship kept the group on a sound footing which continues to this day.

Probably Jem's most significant contribution was still to come as in 1993 he accepted the role of Group President. In many groups this is just a sinecure to acknowledge past service and keep an ex-leader involved but has little or no responsibility. In Jem's case this was far from the truth.

At about this time the group was all too aware that its current headquarters which it had occupied since 1960 had outlived their useful purpose. Jem became one of the driving forces behind the project to either secure funds to rebuild on the existing site or acquire a new premises elsewhere in Claygate. When it became clear that rebuilding on the present site was too expensive and impractical Jem was a key person in obtaining an alternative site. The fruition of this project took place in late 2005 when a new building purpose-built to the group's requirements was completed. The new headquarters was opened in March 2006. Jem's role in this cannot be emphasised enough. As well as chairing the Project Team Jem was a lynchpin in the negotiations with developers, contractors, councillors (at three levels – Parish, Borough and County), local residents and other community organisations. Jem already had enormous respect locally but his dedication to this project enhanced it. He dealt with all parties with tact, firmness where required, one might even suggest in a professional way to ensure that what was delivered was on time, met all the group's needs, kept within appropriate financial constraints and was worthy of scouting and the community.

Quite simply Jem gave 12+ years of his life to this project and without him there could be doubts about whether it would have happened.

Having devoted so much energy, time and skill might have been enough but Jem continued to be active in many other ways at the same time. Jem regularly participated in fund raising events on the organisational side, in Scouts' Owns, at camps, skills events i.e. with young people. He was also a stalwart member of the Group's 'crew' which regularly provided assistance at District and County events e.g. parades, camps. Jem quite happily turned out to drive the minibus, pick up jumble, take kit to camp and many other unsung roles.

Jem's significant contribution to scouting, particularly in Claygate, was acknowledged by the award of the Silver Acorn for specially distinguished services and was further recognised with the award of scouting's highest honour, the Silver Wolf for services of an exceptional nature, the personal award of the Chief Scout.

It is worth noting that during this time Jem was diagnosed and successfully treated for cancer, though it returned with a vengeance and it was a fight he finally succumbed to on the 25th May.

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