

Beryl Mullender Scouting Tribute

Beryl was born in 1937, which is often referred to as the 'Silent generation'. Although some may question the silent bit, as Beryl certainly knew how to put her point across. However, she did show some true personality traits from that birth period. The silent generation were often seen as, hardworking, with strong willpower, who are loyal and respect authority. They like traditional ways and are seen as non-wasteful, but in today's society can be viewed as 'technically challenged'. Many of you may agree that these traits apply to Beryl as I try to summarize Beryl's Scouting life.

Beryl's first recorded record of Scouting was in July 1956, when she was appointed as an assistant at the newly formed 26th Basingstoke, Burnham copse, which later became the Tadley group which we know today. Her husband Mike was the Cub master there and they worked together well growing the group. She stepped down from this, her only uniformed role in 1961 when they moved to Basingstoke to start a family.

For the next 19 years she brought up her family and did a lot of work with the Guide association, helping out with the Guides in the village and across park division. She also got involved in supporting Mike with the running and upkeep of 'the cabin' (the joint Scout and Guide building) at Crabtree campsite, doing a fair bit of the administration, until it was demolished in 2001.

In 1979 when the district of Basingstoke and Deane was split into 3, Beryl took on the role of district secretary for Basingstoke East, a role she relished and best used her organizational skills in getting communications out across the newly formed district.

Beryl continued to support the district in many non-uniformed roles and was awarded the medal of merit in 1990 for her work in growing the new district. She continued her sterling work and became district chair in 1996, and set about raising money for a district headquarters. Beryl was one of the main drivers in getting this to fruition and, 4 years later saw the opening of Base 2000. This was not only the home of the district, but also to the Air Scout group, (which at the time Beryl was an occasional helper with in Beaver section). Additionally, it created a permanent home for Basingstoke Scouting supplies. Her hard work for this was rewarded in 1997 with the presentation of a Silver Acorn. Beryl also worked on the appointments panel for a long period as its secretary, overseeing the appointments of the majority of adult members in the district today.

The longest role Beryl had in Scouting was honorary shop manager for Scouting supplies, a role she held for over 30 years, initially working out of suitcases, and then a cupboard in the air Scout hut, until they got the permanent location in Base 2000. Beryl was seen as one of the many smiling, friendly faces at the shop, often going above and beyond to fulfil the many special requests for uniform and other Scouting items, on many occasions delivering them by hand. All the profits made were fed back into Scouting locally and over the many years probably exceed £100k.

Beryl's knowledge of Scouting was renowned across the district and further afield. Her understanding of P.O.R was second to none but, she often referred to the acronym as 'Plough on Regardless. Beryl worked alongside 7 District Commissioners, giving them 100% support, whether she agreed with their ideas or not. I can recall some of the many discussions we had on how best to plan and run events or activities, some of which would not have been the success they were without the 'behind the scenes' work Beryl did to ensure everything went smoothly.

Beryl would always be seen at district events (even ones she wasn't directly involved in), showing up to give support, whether they were local or further afield, sometimes making a 100+ mile round trip just to show her face. That kind of support stood Beryl out from the crowd.

In 2013 Beryl was awarded the Silver Wolf, the highest award an adult volunteer can get in Scouting. As far as I know there have only been 2 of these awarded in Basingstoke East, both to the Mullenders. Mikes in 2004 and Beryl's in 2013. A truly amazing couple who complimented each other exceptionally.

Beryl's awards didn't stop there as in 2015 she, along with husband Mike were awarded Basingstokes Unsung Hero award, for their exceptional work for Scouting over many years.

Each of us will have our own special reasons to remember Beryl, but for many it will be for her kind words and selfless dedication for the benefit of others that will linger long in our memories.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank her family – her children and grandchildren who, she loved and cherished dearly for sharing their mother and grandmother with the wider Scouting family, who will always be grateful for the tremendous work she did for us all. We thank you.

Andy Cullen

September 2021

Notes:

Beryl's Guiding contributions included a period running the guide troop in Old Basing and a period as District Commissioner in Basingstoke.