

## **MEMORIES of 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> RODBOROUGH BROWNIES by Maureen Arthur (nee Hogg.)**

When I became a Brownie in the 1<sup>st</sup> Rodborough Pack in the summer of 1945, Miss Barbara Daniels was Brown Owl helped by her younger sister Betty Daniels who was Tawny Owl. Our meetings in the summer were held in the tallet (still there) above one of the cowsheds in Stringers' Farmyard in Kingscourt Lane. There wasn't a window so the wooden door high above the road was wide open and I remember how the wonderful perfume from an Orange-Blossom shrub in the next-door garden of Stringers' Court came drifting in, a pleasant change from the usual smells we were used to from the cows. In those days they were fetched in from the Gastrells' fields twice a day for milking so Kingscourt Lane was always spattered with cowpats.

I promised "To do my duty to God, to serve the King (George 6<sup>th</sup>) to think of others before myself and to do a good turn every day." I particularly remember that we learned how to tie different types of knots – granny knots, reef knots, slip knots, sheep-shanks, etc. When the dark nights came around, our meetings were held in the big house of Stringers' Court which was rather dark and gloomy in those days - I didn't like it and I stopped attending...

Some years later Mrs. Nancy Cawthorne took over as Brown Owl and the meetings were then held in the upstairs Whitefield Room in Rodborough Tabernacle. When my daughter, Jane, became a Brownie in 1971, Nancy was still Brown Owl helped by Mrs. Rosemary Townsend as Tawny Owl. I began to lend a hand and Barbara Hardy who was a Ranger helped as a Young Leader; one or two of the Guides often helped as well.

We always had a toadstool in the centre of our circle and the girls worked to gain a wide variety of badges. Nancy knew such a lot of games – I especially remember "Fishes" and "Isn't it Funny How a Bear Likes Honey." The District Commissioner, the late Mrs. Mary Beames, paid us a visit and taught us nice one about Auntie Monica who had a swaying feather in her hat when she went shopping! We entered a district competition which involved making a model and a scrapbook about the history of a local building. We chose Rodborough Tabernacle as our subject but failed to come first because we didn't include anything about nature but our model of Rodborough Tab. was deemed the best. The interesting history scrapbook was later given to Gastrells' School.

Having led the 1<sup>st</sup> Rodbro' Pack for around 30 years, Mrs. Nancy Cawthorne retired and Mrs. Rosemary Townsend became Brown Owl. In 1974 I gave up helping when my 3<sup>rd</sup> child arrived and Mrs. Dawn Beeny took my place.

In the early 1970s, a 2<sup>nd</sup> Rodborough Brownie Pack who met in the downstairs room at Rodborough Tab., was formed with an ex-Rodborough Girl Guide, 18 yr. old Jo Lusty as Brown Owl, Mrs. Jean Walwin as Tawny. Sometime around 1977 Jean encouraged me to return and help them, so I became Snowy Owl to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Rodbro' Pack. I remember going to training days and, amongst other things, learning a new song about a snail going into its shell, with the girls forming a circle and singing whilst they gradually wound themselves into a tight-fitting coil... then out again back into a wide circle. It became popular in the school playground:

**“Hand in hand you see us well – creep like a snail into its shell – ever nearer, ever nearer, ever closer, ever closer!” (until tightly coiled) then – “Hand in hand you see us well – creep like a snail OUT of its shell – ever further, ever further, ever wider, ever wider!” until back into a wide circle again.**

**1977 was memorable when the whole country celebrated Queen Elizabeth 2nd’s Silver Jubilee. Our District Revels were held in the grounds of Bownham Park School and our 2<sup>nd</sup> Rodbro’ Pack made a large painted cardboard church which represented Westminster Abbey. (see photo)**

**For several years in the summer holidays, we went by coach on a week-long themed Pack Holiday to either Macaroni Woods or to Deer Park, each planned around stories such as Alice in Wonderland, Wind in the Willows, and Jungle Book when the adults became leading characters from the stories and the girls were divided into groups of animals, etc. I particularly remember being White Rabbit and another time Badger. We each had special responsibilities and duties, and ribbons were awarded to girls who were especially helpful or good at something. We went for walks, played boisterous games, did various challenges, and made dampers on sticks to toast around a campfire.**

**Each year there was usually one girl who had never been away from home before and would need some extra rest & t.l.c. in the sick room. Some were amazingly independent, helpful and capable. At the end of a Pack Holiday each Brownie was presented with a certificate to record something nice about her personality or helpfulness.**

**When Brown Owl Jo Lusty was married at Randwick Church, we formed a Guard of Honour to greet her when the bridal party came out of church. Sometime later when she gave up as Brown Owl, Jean Walwin took over and I became Tawny Owl. Around that time, I think that the 1<sup>st</sup> Rodbro’ Pack had Mrs. Margaret Moody as Brown Owl, helped by Mrs. Rosemary Tanner.**