

ROBERT (Bob) 'Jock' RITCHIE



"You only get out of life what you put into it", so said Bob 'Jock' Ritchie when asked about his eventful life and eventful it has been - no regrets

Jock was born in Bombay India in 1921. The family returned to Glasgow, Scotland in 1929 where the young Robert (Bob) joined the 24th Glasgow (Bearsdon) Group, established about 1910. He was Patrol Leader, King Scout and Assistant Scoutmaster until 1941 when he went to war, a member of the (RNVR) serving in the Eastern Mediterranean, West Africa, South Africa, and South East Asia.

Demobbed in June 1946 he returned to Glasgow and rejoined his Troop as an ASM under his old Scoutmaster Alec Spalding (another interesting character - Alec is still GSM of the 100 strong 24th and every two years takes his Scouts on an overseas expedition. He also has the complete history of every Scout who has ever been a member of the Troop. Jock corresponds and visits his still active old Scouter on regular intervals.

In 1948 Jock came to South Africa where he joined the 7th GASP a brief stay in Johannesburg saw him in the Rovers and on returning to Cape Town went back to the 7th as ARSL., GSM and then ADC to John McEwan. In 1969 he became Divisional Commissioner Country in the Boland until 1984. He then became Minute Secretary to the Area.

For hobbies Jock joined the MCSA 1953 and has a 50 year certificate and is an honorary life member of the Paarl/Wellington Chapter of the MCSA. Having a phenomenal memory Jock can describe many of the routes up the mountains of the South Cape, which he has climbed.

For kicks he was Chief of the Caledonian Society, Treasurer and Honorary Vice President of the Naval Officers Association of SA.

A Chartered Accountant by profession Jock was a member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants. Oh as an after thought Jock got married in 1955 and his family grew to 4 children and 11 grandchildren. GSM Alec Spalding will be happy that one of his 'boys' has done well when he reads this issue of the CWS! Probably say "Well done Laddie. Well done indeed, Jock we salute you.

More on Jock...

Bob 'Jock' Ritchie is one of the stalwarts at the Heritage Centre. He has been in Scouts a long-long time, 70 years in fact. A great record, but there have been others with similar or longer records. So what makes Jock a record breaker?

Well, he still corresponds with his old Scoutmaster Alex Spalding who is still with his old Troop (24th Glasgow), now as GSM, and last visited him a year or two back. Jock was a member of the Troop from 1935 to 1948 when he came out to South Africa.

Proudly he tells us that the Troop, which was established in 1908, has run without a break since its inception. It proudly displays the names of every Scoutmaster, King and Queen Scout and Duke of Edinburgh Award recipients. The Group has 4 Beaver Colonies, 2 Packs and 2 Troops.

Every second year the Troop goes on an expedition. Some of these have been to America, Canada, Yugoslavia, Denmark, the Greek Islands and so on. Last year the Troop went to North Cape deep in the Arctic Circle. In the six days spent in the Arctic Circle the party experienced perpetual daylight. At midnight the sun reaches its lowest point and they had the pleasure of seeing the sun reach its lowest point and then rise again.

Well we don't think that Jocks record is likely to be broken, but if anyone thinks they can better it please write to us. Troop expeditions also used to be popular; do any of our Troops run expeditions? Where to? Please write and tell us about them – Ed.

*John Waterhouse
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