

# THESE ARE THE TIMES

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*London Gangshow Fellowship*  
*Founder: Ralph Reader CBE*  
*AUTUMN 2022*

## **MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

Long awaited return of our annual camp

Having been cancelled for the last 2 years, this year's camp returned in a new format and was enjoyed by a happy band of campers and non-campers – read all about it in these pages – well, perhaps not all!

GS90

Congratulations to everyone involved in producing the show in celebration of 90 years of Ralph's creation. It was a privilege for us to join the young cast, drawn from across the UK, on stage in the tribute item to Ralph and sing with them.

Special mention to Bob Partington, now resident in Australia, who sponsored an item in the show and a shout out to Peter Dunlop and Brian Stocking who sent a message from New Zealand – and who would, no doubt, have appeared on stage with us had they been not quite so far away!

AGM Sunday 30 October 2022

We are returning to The Garden Room at Warren Lodge Hotel, Church Square, Shepperton, TW17 9JZ,

Join us at 12noon for light refreshments followed by the AGM at 1pm when, amongst other matters, we will discuss the future of The Fellowship.

This is really more of a get together than a business meeting with plenty of time to catch up with friends. The formal notice is included in at the end of this TATTs.

Please let me or Brenda know if you are coming as we need the numbers for catering.

Lgsf-tatts74@hotmail.co.uk [davidclayathome@hotmail.com](mailto:davidclayathome@hotmail.com)

Reunion Saturday 28 January 2023

The Ship Hotel, Monument Green, Weybridge, KT13 8BQ.

Book the date. Details will be attached at the end of the next edition of TATTS in the usual way (1<sup>st</sup> December 2022)

## Pathway Gilwell

We have agreed in principle our trip to view our paving stone in memory of Ralph and are discussing details with the staff at Gilwell. The format is likely to be a brief tour of Gilwell, the highlight for us being visiting Ralphs paving stone. We then plan to arrange refreshments locally. We are proposing to visit in Spring next year and at this stage need to know who is interested in attending so the we may make detailed plans.

Please let me know if you want to come and how many places you want, we will then send you details. [davidclayathome@hotmail.com](mailto:davidclayathome@hotmail.com)

I hope to see you at the AGM and reunion

David



circa 2022.

## FELLOWSHIP CAMP 2022

We made it and although the numbers were not as I had hoped it was nevertheless successful. It enabled us to experience the site and be treated to great hospitality by Rachel and Matt, the owners. The local hotel couldn't have been more helpful with comfortable rooms, good food and a family friendly atmosphere. The surrounding area is beautiful and the River Wye that runs behind the site is safe for swimming, although the weather was not warm enough this year. The other hotels around, within easy distance of the site are also friendly and all reasonably priced. I know people were concerned about not camping and how the catering would work, but everyone worked together and it was fine. We all took our own mugs, plates, cutlery etc and several members added tea, coffee, milk and alcohol to the communal pot. The coffee morning proved to be great and we raised £62 in the raffle.

Saturday evening we held the bar-b-que, the meat, potatoes, rolls and salad etc were bought in bulk locally and every person paid £10 which covered the food. We cooked together, ate together, laughed and finally sang together. We had erected a make shift shelter, but have decided that next year we will take the LGSF's green striped marquee (some may remember it!). The marquee will mean we can shut out the elements more easily or shelter from the burning sun safely!



Elizabeth Smith (nee Fricker) deserves a big thank you from us all for arranging our contact with the camp site. I would personally like to say thank you to Elizabeth, Ema Washington (Dave Cregeen's

daughter) and my daughter Joanne Shilling for helping with the tracking down of numerous options and helping make the decision to use Glasbury. Very few people responded about the options offered and so we went for the option where the campsite was a reasonable price and the nearby hotels, B & Bs etc meant those of us who either do not have our own rigs anymore or cannot camp were able to feel very much back at the annual camp. We had a few day visitors on the Saturday, who arrived for the coffee morning and stayed all day joining in with the bar-b-q. Details for 2023 will be appear in Winter TATTS and I very much hope more members will join us in Glasbury next June.

Brenda

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## **PLANNED FUTURE EVENTS.**

**AGM** Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2022

**ANNUAL DINNER AND DANCE** Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2023

**ANNUAL CAMP/GET TOGETHER** Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> – Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2023

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## **An appeal that is close to many members hearts!! Downe Scout Campsite.**

The story of Gang Show and Downe are inextricably linked. We have received a request for any information re certain items held at Downe. Details are included in this item; we have also included the fund-raising flyer produced by the Friends of Downe.

Regarding the information below. You are probably aware by now the Scout Association are in the process of selling Downe Camp Site. The Friends of Downe have been in negotiation with TSA for almost two years in an attempt to buy the site and save it for 'Scouting'

The main stumbling block has been the raising the required £2million. You may have already seen the attached item, for background information if you haven't.

The items below are still on the site and the fund raisers are seeking more information regarding them. If you have any information, please contact [bill.gunn@btinternet.com](mailto:bill.gunn@btinternet.com)

Even at this late stage they are hoping that the site with historical connection with B-P, Ralph Reader and Gang Show, also the heritage therein can be retained within Scouting with the help of 'Friends of Down Activity Centre' Charity Number 1194761

## **Shackleton Items.**

Desk and Snowshoes.

It is believed that the ship was given to sea scouts who at a later point distributed the fixtures and fittings between the, then 19 national centres, when the ship was refitted to become a training vessel during the second world war.

## HMS Victory

The site has a piece of the HMS victory that was given to the site by Admiral Philpott as he oversaw the vessel being retrieved and brought into dock after it was discovered by the sea scouts.

Apparently, whilst being brought into dock it hit the quayside, a sizable chunk broke off. This was sawn into pieces and given to the Scout Association national centres. Admiral Philpott, who was a regular visitor to Downe, details are in the visitor log.

Any information would be incredibly useful.

Please reply to [bill.gunn@btinternet.com](mailto:bill.gunn@btinternet.com) explaining that you are a member of the London Gang Show Fellowship

## Downe Campsite.



Over the years, tens of thousands of young people have enjoyed the great outdoors at Downe Campsite - situated near Biggin Hill airfield just 16 miles from central London – maybe you were one of them??



The 86 acres, comprising ancient woodland and areas of special scientific interest, have been in the ownership of Scouting since 1929 when the London Scout Council purchased them to offer outdoor facilities for scouts.



Lord Baden Powell recognised the potential of the site, especially with the addition of a swimming pool - dug by hand by many volunteers and funded by a performance in 1932 of 'Downe at Piccadilly'; this gave birth to the Gang Shows - the proceeds of which in following years were distributed by Ralph Reader between all the national campsites.

During WW2, the campsite was commandeered by the War Department as its facilities and proximity to Biggin Hill made it an ideal training facility for the Home Guard. In the post war era, Scouting continued to flourish, the site receiving thousands of visits every year from boys all over London excitedly anticipating the adventures that lay ahead with the skills and memories made during this time to last a lifetime.

Downe has hosted many family, District, County and International Camps and Jamborees. Campdowne 89 was the first of 7 international camps held at Downe each hosting 2,000 Guides and Scouts from around the world. These events provided an international Jamboree experience forging lifelong friendships for both home and overseas visitors, Downe Activity Centre was profitable until its closure due to Covid in March 2020 and was receiving 20,000 plus visitors each year from schools, Duke of Edinburgh expedition groups, Scouts and Guide's. The centre continued to provide affordable outdoor space for adventure, camping and team building to some of the most deprived areas of London as well as the young people of Bromley, Bexley and Kent.

So the news in 2020 that the Scout Association intended to sell this heritage site - where Charles Darwin was a regular visitor conducting a number of his famous experiments - was received with dismay by the countless people who shared the memories of joy, friendship and skills they had gained at the campsite.

The Friends of Downe Activity Centre - a group of Scout and Guide leaders and others with a broad skillset, have come together to save the site. They are now registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organization (Registered Charity No 1194761) to raise £2million to purchase this historical and ecologically important site from the Scout Association and operate it as a community-driven activity centre for all ages and abilities.

If you feel you can help us succeed in this endeavour, please contact us via our website



–<https://downeactivitycentre.org.uk> or by email [friends@downeactivitycentre.org.uk](mailto:friends@downeactivitycentre.org.uk)

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### Editor's Notes

This year has been a time for meeting up again and getting involved where we could.

As I have reported above LGSF camp went ahead and was successful. Of course the weather was a mixed bag but it didn't seem to dampen anybody's spirits and I will be booking my place in the next month, once I have decided how long I want to stay.

GS90 was a hot, hectic day but brought back lots of memories and was a great time to catch up with some members of the gang rarely seen.

The Committee has continued to keep in touch and we had a face to face committee meeting in July. Any decisions that came out of that meeting will be circulated in the usual manner and if there is anyone you know who doesn't receive email or snail mail, please let them know any relevant details.

We are hoping that 2022/2023 will see the usual activities taking place and information on these will appear in the usual manner either in TATTS or through email and snail mail, strikes permitting!!

**The Official notification of the AGM 2022 is included at the end of this edition and can I please impress on everyone how important it is to let me know if you are attending. We are booked at The Warren Lodge again this year. If you have been unable to attend in previous years it would be lovely to see you and a great way of spending time with friends we haven't seen for so long. The meeting is usually about an hour with time before and after to chat and socialize.**

Please don't forget to look at the website and encourage others to do the same. There are some amazing photographs and fabulous memories, which are updated as and when new material is found. Have a chuckle at yourself and remember old friends and the great fun we all had. **lgsf.org.uk**

We continue to contact members of the gang but this depends on your support in passing on information to help us. TATTS is being received both by e-mail and post, however, if anyone has any ideas how we can reach some of our past show members or knows of any members who would like to be contacted, please let Richard or myself know.

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Many thanks to all those people who keep me up to date with happy and sad events around the globe and for ideas to keep TATTS more interesting. It would be great to hear about your shows, when they resume so that we can publish details and any locals or those wanting to catch up with friends to visit and of course any great reviews or relevant information about members.

Although it is difficult to include too many features keep them coming please and I will include as many as possible.

Looking forward to meeting again soon.

Brenda

**“Keep looking for the Bluebird”**

**TATTS is sponsored by ATL**

# **LONDON GANG SHOW FELLOWSHIP**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Notice is hereby given that the forty-sixth Annual General Meeting of the London Gang Show Fellowship will be held at The Warren Lodge, Church Square, Shepperton, Middlesex on Sunday, 30th October 2022 commencing at 1.00pm.



The following business will be transacted: -

**Adoption of Annual Report and Accounts Election of President, Vice-Presidents, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer Election of six members to the Executive Committee.**

Nominations for any of the above offices should reach the Secretary no later than 14th October 2022.

Please join us at 12 noon for light refreshments. There will also be a cash bar available.

Guests are welcome at the meeting but shall not vote.

Members are also reminded that the annual subscription of £5 falls due on 1<sup>st</sup> October and should be sent to the Membership Secretary, Mr Richard Micklefield – address below.

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[richard@remohca.com](mailto:richard@remohca.com)

Committee nominations and apologies please to the Secretary : -

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**NB**

**It will greatly assist with catering if you will please confirm your attendance**