

Scout Dusts Off After Marathon Greek Trip

History doesn't record whether Greek hero Phidippides paused for a shower or two on his historic 150-mile dash across the dusty plains of Marathon.

But you couldn't blame 17-year-old Robin Derrick, of 338 Browndale Crescent, for thinking he must have needed a good bath at the end of his journey.

"It was really dusty out there," comments Robin as he recalls the experience he had last August on those plains of Marathon in Greece while attending the 11th World Jamboree.

The wind never let up, he said, "and the land was flat and scrubby. It hadn't rained for 27 days. We needed four or five showers a day to keep clean."

It was the first time Robin had ever been to Greece or even out of North America and he was quick to tag the word "thrilling" on his whole experience.

He was one of 14,000 boy scouts there from 89 countries which also included 432 Canadians. The camp locale was once the scene of the earliest battle vital to democracy when 10,000 Greek

soldiers under Miltiades repulsed the invasion in 490 B.C. of Persian King Darius. This was when Phidippides made his big dash for Spartan aid.

"I was surprised to be the one selected for this area," said Robin. "I just put my application in at the last moment and didn't expect any success."

Robin was representing 1st Beverley Acres Scout Troop of which he has been a member for six and a half years. He was selected for his prowess as a scout, school work, and other assets from the District of York Summit.

"We left in three flights for Athens on a Boeing Jet," he said, "and reached Athens by way of Paris, France. It took us 10 hours to get to Paris and by the time we had reached Athens we had gone 30 hours without sleep."

Robin's first impression of Athen was one of heat and more heat.

"It was a hot, dry day and the humidity was like a thick blanket over you. The temperature ranged from 90 to 120 degrees. You could say it got cold at night when the temperature went down to 70-degrees."

Then it was off to the plains of Marathon and two weeks of fun and games, shaking hands with scouts from other nations, and, of course, quite a few shower-baths.

Eating was a big part of the two-weeks and Robin has to confess that while he likes the Greeks he finds their food a little too spicy and greasy for his constitution.

"But it was their bread," he said with a shake of his

head, "that got us. It was hard as a rock. We made a movie showing one of the fellows bashing it against a tin-can. The can was damaged but the bread didn't have a dint in it."

A busy schedule of activities kept everyone busy with features of the stay being marathon contests, exhibitions of skill, addresses from Lady Baden-Powell, wife of the founder of the Scout Movement, and Crown Prince Constantine, Chief Scout of Greece.

"We had a special march-past before King Paul of Greece," noted Robin, "and it took 90 minutes for the parade to pass."

One of the more unforgettable moments came when Robin took a swim in the Aegean Sea which he describes as ideal for anyone who has trouble staying atop the surface on Canadian water.

"It was very salty," he said, "and you could float on your back all day."

This was fun but there could be a slight hitch in any such all-day plans. The hitch were sharks, unfriendly sharks.

"There were sharks in the area," he said, "and while we were there a warning was sent out. A few shark bombs were dropped but I didn't see any sharks."

After the jamboree was over Robin spent nine days in Athens and described the people as being very friendly.

"But it is quite shocking to see the difference between the rich and poor classes. Greece has the second lowest standard of living in

Europe." Finally it was back to Canada and a drawer-full of memories.

"The trip cost almost \$1,000 (a portion of this money paid by Robin will be made up by funds raised for

his trip) but it was more than worth it. It was terrific. I hope I can go back to Greece again . . . soon."



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Mr. and Mrs. Ronald James Stirling following their recent marriage at St. Mary's Anglican Church, Richmond Hill. The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon L. Lewis. The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Archibald Stirling of Scotland. (Photo by Russell Reid)

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