

Ken Crosby alias 'Bronco'

Now President of the Portsmouth Wild West Association and the last but by no means least of the known few to have attended all 19 & now 20 meets.

From tentative early beginnings Ken is now an intrinsic part of our meet as well as of his own group. The Portsmouth Wild West have wholeheartedly supported our meet from the very first year. We both donate monies to charities from these events. Ours has varied over the years but theirs has been for the Children's Ward, St Mary's Hospital Portsmouth for a very long time.

Our Country and Western Meet relies heavily on the generosity of the Portsmouth Wild West Association, who appear year after year, re-enact their displays all over the weekend and perform the Trilogy in the evenings. All of this is done solely for the collections that they make. They neither receive nor expect any expenses and do all this just for their charity. Dorset DA add to the collected amount but please give generously next time the bucket is passed your way. Lets try to make both our 20th and their 25th year good for their charity too.

As for Ken --- Always the gentleman

Always at the Bar in the evenings

Always drinking Southern Comfort -if you ask!!!

Thank you Ken and Portsmouth Wild West Association.

Couldn't do it without you All!!!!

On behalf of the Committee & Members of the Portsmouth Wild West Association I wish to congratulate The Dorset D.A. on achieving the 20th anniversary of their successful Country & Western Meets. Well done everyone involved.

I am fortunate in that I have attended every one and still managed (contrary to popular belief) to maintain a degree of sanity.

Although I and my family had been involved in the C&W scene for many years we had only joined the PWWA the month before your first meet, and having done only one show with them at Southsea, we were very much 'greenhorns', having had little experience of western re-enactment.

When we were told that the next show was to be at a big Caravan Club meeting in Wareham Forest we became quite excited. In those days we had no camping gear and when we first joined the Association, no intention of camping. So we decided to travel to the venue each day. 'What a let down' Because of the children, then aged thirteen and ten, we were late leaving home and then I lost the way somewhere and we were quite late arriving at the venue, only to receive a 'rocket' from the events manager for not being there to help put up the scenery. The next upset, where we had expected to find loads of authentic looking westerners, we found lots of people just playing at being Cowboys & Cowgirls, however, we soon found out they were a friendly crowd and we began to enjoy ourselves.

Neither my son or myself can remember what the weather was like and my only memory of the first show was being shot early on, probably as a punishment for being late and so all I saw was grass a few inches from my eyes.

We decided that instead of leaving straight after the show we would partake of the pig roast rather than go home to eat, but this did not suit my daughter, who is a vegetarian, she had to do with some remaining sandwiches. Due to prior commitments we did not return on the Sunday Or Monday.

I have to admit that after the treatment we had on that Saturday from certain members of the PWWA we were uncertain as to whether we would remain in the Association, but we persevered. I was subsequently elected Treasurer, a post I held for two years. I then had a rest for one year before being elected President, a post in which I have remained for the last fourteen years, as well as being events manager for several years.

The next year we met the DDA again at Sixpenny Handley and although we were not camping not yet having 'caught the bug' and bought any camping gear, we attended both Saturday & Sunday. I guess we must have had a good time because we were back again the next year complete with tent and associated equipment including a dent in my bank balance buying it all.

Over the years I reckon that we have had every type of weather at your meets, frost, snow, gales, torrential rain and really good summer weather, but no matter what, everyone still manages to enjoy it, with so many coming back each year.

After a few years my children grew out of the western scene and left the Association, the tent gave way to the small motor caravan that I still use today and then my wife gave up re-enacting. I however seemed to get even more involved and am still 'playing cowboys'

Incidentally 2004 will be the 25th anniversary of the PWWA it was formed in 1979, although there are no original members left. Chris Gardener is our longest serving member, having joined a few months before me, our next long serving member Peter Tillet joined 1987. All other members joined between 1988 and 2003. We currently have 38 members although some of them do not camp so you do not see all of us.

I know most of our members will agree that your meet is the friendliest of the many events we attend every year, last year we did 51 shows at 14 different venues, most of them camping week ends, which is why so many come back year after year. In fact a few of our people camp at your event only.

Because of the way it started nineteen years ago yours is the only event where we rely on the generosity of your collection instead of a contracted fee as we do with every other organisation we do shows for. We also appreciate your donation each year to our charity, the Children's Ward at St Mary's Hospital Portsmouth. I personally enjoy coming back each year making new friends and meeting old friends, a lot of them I have watched grow up, makes me feel quite old sometimes.

Happy trails, as we westerners say-----Adios

Ken Crosby