

Friends speak of former Scout's determination to help others

Praise for generosity of Iraq kidnap victim

by Paul Whitelam

paul.whitelam@lincolnshireecho.co.uk

FRIENDS of Lincoln man Peter Moore – who was kidnapped in Iraq nine months ago – have spoken out about his generous spirit and determination to help others.

Mr Moore (34), who grew up in the Brant Road area of Lincoln, was one of five Britons snatched at gunpoint from the Finance Ministry building in Baghdad on May 29 last year.

Mr Moore appeared in a video shot by a Shiite militia group broadcast by Dubai-based Al-Arabiya TV last week.

In the recording, he says he misses his family.

In response, his stepmother Pauline Sweeney made a fresh appeal on behalf of all five hostages.

Mr Moore was a keen Scout and Venture Scout in his youth and won his Chief Scout Award aged 15 before gaining the Queen's Scout Award in 1993.

Former Scout leader of Washington Scout Group Mike Martin (41), of Moorland Crescent, Lincoln, said Mr Moore came to his group on a placement while working towards his Queen's Scout Award.

"He eventually went off to university and I didn't see him until we bumped into each other in the High Street about 10 years ago," said Mr Martin. "He said he'd just come back from China. When I saw the video I could tell he was well and well fed but there was a lot of pain in his eyes.

"The Pete I knew had no political or religious views at all. I'm looking forward to the day when news flashes around the world that he's free."

Prior to going to Iraq Mr Moore had helped run a flood relief database in Guyana, having first visited the country on a Voluntary Service Overseas project.

And it is this spirit of helping others that Mr Moore first displayed as a Scout, according to his former Scout leader Malcolm Moore, from South Hykeham.

"Peter was good friends with my son Philip and of course I also knew him through the Brant Road Scout Group," he said.

"He did a lot to help the youngsters and helping others has continued into his adult life.

"I suspected it might be Peter on the video by the shape of his face but it wasn't until I heard his voice that I knew it was him. I just hope



SCOUTING DAYS: Peter Moore (second left) receiving his Chief Scout Award. Insets: Former scoutmasters Malcolm Moore and Mike Martin. Below: The video of Peter who is being held hostage in Iraq.



there is a happy outcome. I really feel for his family."

Mr Moore said he has ensured that Peter and the four other hostages are on the weekly prayer list at St Peter and St Paul Catholic Church, in Skellingthorpe Road, Lincoln.

Candles are also lit in Lincoln Cathedral for them every day.

Captives set free

■ The BBC's Gaza correspondent Alan Johnston spent 114 days as a hostage before he was freed unharmed on July 4 last year. He was kidnapped by a Jihadi organisation called the Army of Islam. The BBC mounted a worldwide campaign for his release.

■ Church envoy Terry Waite went to Beirut in January 1987 to negotiate the release of hostages but was himself held captive for 1,760 days before being released on November 18, 1991.

■ Eight British sailors and seven marines on patrol in the Gulf were detained by Iran's Revolutionary Guards on March 23 last year. Iran accused the crew of straying into its waters but the British said they were in Iraqi territory.

They were released nearly two weeks later. Two crew members sold their stories to the Press and attracted criticism from former military personnel and relatives of those killed or injured in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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