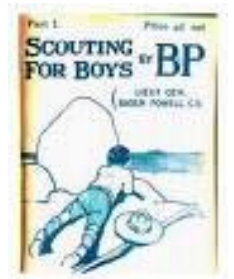


COOKHAM SCOUTING CENTENARY HIKE



BRITONS



JOIN YOUR COUNTRY'S ARMY!
GOD SAVE THE KING

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PREFACE: AN EARLY VISIT..

This hike route concentrates on local connections to the pioneer days of Scouting, but Baden Powell had been here before...

During the third quarter of the nineteenth century, while still at school, a young Robert Baden Powell made two big voyages on the Thames that would have taken him through Maidenhead and Cookham.

One was with two of his brothers in a collapsible canvas cockleshell boat. They paddled it from London, up the Thames, past Maidenhead and Cookham, and as close to the source of the river as they could manage. He wrote: "we carried our cooking kit, tent and bedding with us and camped out at nights, getting our supplies of food from farms or villages as we went along, and catching fish from the stream". When they reached the source of the river they carried the boat overland to the source of the Avon, then followed that through Bath and Bristol before crossing the Severn, and paddling up the rapids of the Wye to a holiday cottage in Wales.

On another occasion he canoed down the Thames from Oxford to Weybridge.

So every time we take to the water at Longridge we are paddling the same river as Baden Powell.

COOKHAM SCOUTING CENTENARY HIKE

On this hike or bike ride around Cookham you can see several sites linked to the Centenary of Scouting. The route will show you...

- Where Baden Powell's sister's boyfriend changed history up a tree
- Where Baden Powell could have drowned before Scouting even began
- Where three of the writers that inspired Baden Powell stayed
- Where Wide Games entered the Scouting programme
- Where the man who triggered the war that made Baden Powell a hero stayed
- Where Baden Powell's Greatest Contemporary went swimming fully clothed
- What links BP, Butch Cassidy, Sherlock Holmes and Holy Trinity Church

Remember:

- Take care crossing busy roads
- Be careful cycling on the roads
- Wear a helmet if riding a bike
- If leaving the bike to explore an area, lock it up securely

The context:

Robert Baden Powell: its useful to have an overview of Baden Powell's life and the origins of Scouting before starting this trail since many of the key connections that the walk traces will be discovered out of sequence.

He was born in London in 1857 and went to Charterhouse School on a scholarship. He went into the army straight from school and served across the world: in India, Afghanistan and South Africa amongst other countries. During his army career he became interested in how scouting skills could help the army. He defined scouting as "the work and attributes of backwoodsmen, explorers and frontiersmen" and published books aimed at an army audience called "Reconnaissance and Scouting" and "Aids to Scouting". He served in the Boer War (1899- 1902) in South Africa where his valour and leadership in defending the town of



Mafeking during a 7 month siege made him a national hero. Winston Churchill's aunt was one of those besieged and her telegraph message home captured the mood of pluck in adversity that Baden Powell inspired: "Breakfast today horse sausage. Lunch minced mule and curried locusts. All well". The country was looking for good news from this war, which otherwise was a disaster. The Relief of Mafeking was greeted by bonfires and rejoicing across the country. Baden Powell returned to Britain after the War as Inspector General of Cavalry, but his mind was already turning to other things. He was increasingly convinced that new activities had to be

provided for young people, and felt that his experience in organising the youth of Mafeking to help defend the town could be a blueprint for a new activity programme for young people.

Three Big Ideas: Robert Baden Powell made a unique contribution to activities for young people worldwide when he unveiled his Scouting formula on Brownsea Island in 1907. But his ideas about outdoor life, public service and the way that young people should be brought up did not appear out of nowhere. They were part of the general political, educational and intellectual debates of his day, and many of the people who guided and inspired him (and who we shall meet on this tour) shared his preoccupations. Three key themes stand out:

The Boer War and the Crisis of Empire: At the end of the nineteenth century, The British Empire was at its peak and Britain was the world's major power. For many, the dynamism of the Imperial frontier contrasted with what Baden Powell called "dear, drowsy, after-lunch old England". Defeats by Dutch colonist farmers in the Boer War shocked Britain in the way that setbacks in Iraq were to shock the United States a century later. Kipling summed up the thought that the War's result should be a call to action:

"Let s admit it fairly, as a business people should,

We have had no end of a lesson: it will do us no end of good....

It was our fault, and our very great fault - and now we must turn it to use.

We have forty million reasons for failure, but not a single excuse.

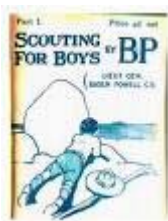
So the more we work and the less we talk the better results we shall get.

We have had an Imperial lesson. It may make us an Empire yet!"

Recruitment for the War had shown up the shocking state of health of many urban Britons. Many grew convinced that new ideas were needed to improve the physical and moral fitness of the British people, and that the country needed to return to an older code of honour. This theme unites Baden Powell with others we will meet on this tour such as Roger Pocock, Arthur Conan Doyle and Kipling himself. Like Baden Powell, several others we will meet lived lives of adventure on the imperial frontier: Pocock, Jameson, Churchill and Kitchener among them.

The Power of Nature and the Outdoors: During the nineteenth century Britain had transformed itself from a predominantly agricultural economy to the most urban and industrialised nation on Earth. The Industrial Revolution had brought great wealth but it had also brought pollution and disease in the towns. Like Baden Powell, many of those encountered on this Centenary Trail believed that a healthier and more natural life could be led outdoors in the countryside. Geoffrey Winthrop Young, Roger Pocock, Kenneth Grahame and Frederick Walker fall into this category.

The Idealisation of Childhood: In pre-industrial and early industrial times most children had laboured for their parents from a very early age. In the Nineteenth century children became seen as in need of legal protection and education. Children became seen as very special and closer to nature than adults. Childhood was seen by many as the ideal stage in life. Bringing up the next generation properly was seen as vital for the future of the country. Baden Powell, Kenneth Grahame, JM Barrie and Kipling all shared some of this view . It is no coincidence that this was the first golden age of British childrens' fiction.



All these themes helped shape Baden Powell's ideas about Scouting. In 1907 he hosted the experimental Scout Camp at Brownsea Island and in 1908 he published Scouting for Boys. The movement was a huge and international success. Within two years there were over 100,000 members and the Boy Scouts were soon joined by Girl Guides, Wolf Cubs and Rover Scouts. When the First World War broke out, Scouts helped on the home front. The trauma of the War was to trigger one of the biggest changes to Baden Powell's

original idea of Scouting, with the focus moving from Imperialism to World Peace. This change was exemplified by the first World Scout Jamboree in 1920.

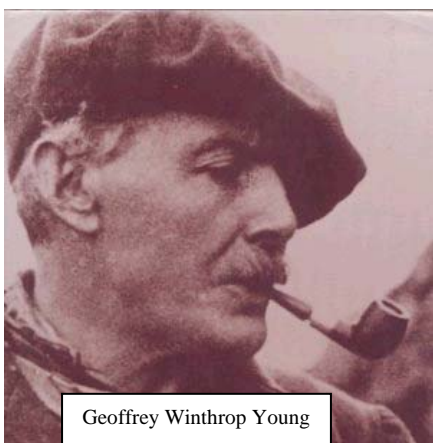
Cookham is an area rich in connections to the ideas and people who founded Scouting.

STOP ONE: THE ODNEY POOL AT COOKHAM WEIR (903 855)

From the top of Cookham High Street at 903 853 turn left and then turn immediately right into Odney Lane (you will see the unmistakable Cookham Tarrystone by the side of the road at the junction). Follow the lane until it ends at a gate just before the bridge. If cycling, dismount at this stage and wheel your bike to the first stop. Go through the gate and over the bridge and carry on on this track for 400m until Cookham Weir at 903 855. The large open expanse of water to your right is the old Odney bathing pool. These days fishing is a far more common leisure activity here.

Baden Powell's visit to Cookham:

In the year or so before the Brownsea Island camp Baden Powell was looking for activities that could be part of the programme. In the summers of 1906 and 1907 he visited the Young family, who lived on Formosa Island in Cookham. One of the family was **Geoffrey Winthrop Young**, a pioneer British Mountaineer.



Geoffrey Winthrop Young

When a student at Cambridge, Young and his friend George Trevelyan devised a Man Hunt game to be played each Easter in the Lake District. A "hare" is selected and is distinguished by a red sash. The rest of the players are "hounds" and must pursue the hare across the moorland. When the hare is tagged by a hound the sash changes hands and the roles are reversed. The game can range over many miles and can take all day. It was first played in 1898 and is still played annually by Cambridge students.

Geoffrey Winthrop Young described Baden Powell's visit to Cookham in his memoirs:

"Robert Baden Powell sat on the Formosa lawn...He was full of plans for scouting for boys - to occupy them better- and asked me to take him out on the river so that I might describe to him our Man-hunt on the fells, and another Game which my brother George had invented, in which two of us had to convey dispatches safely by pace or bluff from one end to the other of some open territory, like Maidenhead thicket, while the rest used every means to intercept and capture them"

The link between George and Geoffrey Young's games and the Wide Games that have always been a part of Scouting are obvious. A year later, on the Pioneer Camp at Brownsea Island Scouts played a game called deerstalking where the Scouts had to chase a human deer. In Scouting for Boys a version of the Winthrop Young game makes up the chapter "Mountain Scouting", although in this version just spotting the hare was enough to take his life.

When Baden Powell visited Formosa, Geoffrey Winthrop Young took him out on the river in a Canadian Canoe. They paddled up to this pool at Odney where the currents of the weir streams are strong. At the time a tall upright post stood in the water in front of the weir. Winthrop Young takes up the story:

“His (Baden Powell’s) alert senses must have warned him that our swing out on to the rapids was critical, and action on the part of all hands called for. He broke off his story...I never heard the end - and dug in vigorously with his paddle on the up-stream side. The whole force of the fall was with him: nothing could counteract the dig. We spun like a tee totum on a pin, and too soon, with the great wooden post sticking up through the boil under our lee. I flung my whole weight onto a deep scoop of the paddle on the lee side, so as to force our stern up-stream of the post, and swing round it, without being sandbagged across it and sunk with a broken back. We just scraped past...But the heave and side-scoop had shopped a quantity of water....In this, as it swashed audibly to and fro, the General sat, gallantly immovable, because a breath would have upset our water-logged balance while we shot down the rapid, until I could ground on the gravel eyot...”

Baden Powell and Geoffrey Winthrop Young remained in contact. Baden Powell visited him at Eton College, where he was a teacher. Winthrop Young became one of the pivotal figures in the evolution of British Mountaineering, a major influence on people like George Mallory. In 1922, after Young lost a leg in the Great War, BP commissioned an article from him on rock climbing as “an educative activity for Boy Scouts” The Odney bathing pool was where Young first showed an aptitude for climbing, on the same ten foot high mooring post in the middle of the pool where he and Baden Powell almost came to grief in the canoe. Winthrop Young used to climb up it and dive off. The top was so precarious a position that there was no chance to stand straight up. The final pull of the climb needed to flow straight through into the push-off of the dive.

George and Geoffrey Young’s brother Hilton, also brought up at Formosa, became a leading politician and author (he was Neville Chamberlain’s successor as Minister for Health), who married Kathleen Scott, widow of **Captain Robert Scott**, Scott of the Antarctic. One of Cookham’s Cub packs today is called Robert Scott, although I don’t know if there is a deliberate connection.



Baden Powell was not the only person encouraging outdoor recreation in the early years of the twentieth century. One other was **Millican Dalton**, nicknamed the Borrowdale Caveman since he would live for much of the year in a cave in the Lake District. In the 1920s he lived for much of the time in a camp in High Heavens Wood in Marlow Bottom. The eccentric Dalton was adamant that he and not Baden Powell had invented short trousers. In fact, army and police uniforms in Africa had featured shorts a lot earlier. He hired himself out as a guide and one of the trips he advertised was a rowing trip from Maidenhead to Sonning where the party would “row up past the beautiful woods of Cliveden to Cookham and camp in a beautiful situation by a good bathing pool”. This is almost certainly the same pool we are now at.

Return across Odney Common.

Go down Odney lane

Turn right at the end then immediately left into Churchgate to visit Holy Trinity Church

STOP TWO: HOLY TRINITY CHURCH (897 855)



Holy Trinity Church: Memorials in the church have links to the origins of Scouting. They show some of the social interconnections that were common in the enclosed world of English upper class life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Beside the Font there is a memorial to the painter **Fred Walker** a Victorian landscape painter described by Millais as “the greatest artist of the century”. He was a friend of the writer William Makepeace Thackeray, who was also a friend of Baden

Powell's father. BP's father was an Oxford academic and clergyman and the family mixed in literary and academic circles. BP met the great art critic John Ruskin as a boy. Ruskin watched him drawing. Baden Powell's drawings were a key part books like "Scouting for Boys". Ruskin was one of the chief rebels against the industrial age, advocating the values of handcraft and nature: both themes that feature in Baden Powell's thinking. Ruskin was also a friend of the Youngs at Formosa, writing that they lived "like swans on the river". Holy Trinity Church also includes memorials to many of **the Young Family** (on the right hand wall as you walk down towards the altar) Baden Powell himself was a keen amateur painter and sculptor and like Walker and Ruskin he had work exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts in Piccadilly.

By the organ there is a bronze plaque to **Roger Pocock**, founder of the League of Frontiersmen. Roger Pocock was from a family that had lived near Cookham since the early nineteenth century. He was eight years younger than Baden Powell. As a child his family moved to Canada, where he served as a Mountie, losing the toes of his right foot to frostbite. Then he was a Mountain Guide in the Rockies, a military scout in the Boer War, a spy in Russia and a journalist. His ride on horseback from Canada to Mexico set records, and his greatest journalistic scoop was to ride up to the hideout of the highly dangerous Butch Cassidy and get an interview for his paper. On Christmas Eve 1904, just as Baden Powell was starting to form his ideas for Scouting together, Pocock wrote to the press proposing the foundation of a "League of Frontiersmen", people like himself with adventurous backgrounds who could come to the aid of their country and empire. His inspiration was Rudyard Kipling's poem "The Lost Legion" (1895):

"There's a Legion that never was 'listed / That carries no colour or crest

But, split in a thousand detachments, / Is breaking the road for the rest...

The ends of the Earth were our portion, / The ocean at large was our share.

There was never a skirmish to windward / But the Leaderless Legion was there...

We preach in advance of the Army, / We skirmish ahead of the Church,

With never a gunboat to help us / When we are scuppered and left in the lurch..."



The Legion was an immediate success, and provided support to the intelligence services in the run up to the First World War. Pocock raised his own battalion to fight in that war, the only battalion in the British Army raised without government involvement or sponsorship. Of the 17,000 members of the League at the outbreak of War, 9,000 were killed in action. The uniform of the League of Frontiersmen was a loose shirt, a neckerchief and a broad-brimmed hat. Its influence on the early Scout movement is obvious. The Pocock family believe that Baden Powell consulted Pocock about Scouting between the foundation of the League and the Brownsea experimental camp. Scouting for boys mentions Frontiersmen in Chapter One:

"Besides war scouts, there are also peace scouts - men who in peace time carry out work which requires the same kind of pluck or resourcefulness. These are the frontiersmen of the world. The pioneers and trappers of North and South America, the hunters of Central Africa, the explorers and missionaries....all these are peace scouts, real men in every sense of the word and good at scout craft. They understand how to live out in the jungle. They can find their way anywhere, and are able to read meanings from the smallest signs and foot tracks. ...They are strong and plucky, ready to face danger, and always keen to help each other. They are accustomed to take their lives in their hands, and to risk them without hesitation if they can help their country by doing so."

This was Pocock's philosophy, and also largely his biography. Pocock's book "The Frontiersman's Pocket Book" is recommended by Baden Powell in "Scouting for Boys". Pocock contributed an article to the very first edition of Scouting's first regular magazine, "The Scout". Baden Powell specifically mentions Frontiersmen in Scouting for Boys as potential Scout Leaders. Pocock is commemorated by a bronze plaque near the organ in Holy Trinity Church. Members of the League of Frontiersmen still attend the Remembrance Sunday service in Holy Trinity and lay a wreath at Cookham Village War Memorial.



Several other key members of the League of Frontiersmen had an influence on Scouting's early days: **Frederick Courtenay Selous** was one of the major explorers and big game hunters of the period. For Victorian and Edwardian imperial Brits there was still a very close link between discovering new territory and shooting the wildlife that lived there. Selous once organised an African safari for American President Teddy Roosevelt and his son Kermit in which 300 people were employed and 500 animals shot. Writing to his mother in 1888, the young Baden Powell described Selous as "the most wonderful man of this century". Selous is mentioned twice in "Scouting for Boys", firstly as an example of a "peace scout" in the very first chapter and secondly through recounting a story of his survival for three weeks in the wilderness after his camp had been raided by a hostile tribe. **H Rider Haggard**, another member of the League of Frontiersmen, used Selous as the model for his hero Alan Quatermain in a series of bestselling adventure stories like "She" and "King Solomon's Mines"



Arthur Conan Doyle was a surgeon and writer. His greatest fictional creation, Sherlock Holmes, is quoted six times in "Scouting for Boys", and the real-life figure on whom Holmes was based, Edinburgh Professor Dr Joseph Bell, also gets a mention. Deduction skills were heavily stressed in the early Scout programme. Baden Powell made much of the supposed medieval ideal of chivalry, and so Conan Doyle's novel "The White Company" is recommended to Scouts to read. Like many of those who influenced Baden Powell Conan Doyle had been in South Africa at the time of the Boer War, running an army hospital.

As a further brief diversion, Pocock's sister, **Lena Ashwell**, was one of the leading actresses of the day. The playwright George Bernard Shaw called her "divinely gifted". She took the title role in the first production of Shaw's "Mrs Warren's Profession". She won an MBE for organising theatrical entertainments for the Troops in France during World War One, running 25 companies in parallel at the time of the Armistice. She married the surgeon who witnessed the birth of the current patron of the Scout Association, Her Majesty the Queen.



STOP THREE: COOKHAM HIGH STREET AND THE MOOR:



The Stanley Spencer Gallery (897 853): The artist Stanley Spencer was Cookham's most famous resident and the village that he grew up and lived in was central to his artistic vision. There is no record of Spencer and Baden Powell ever meeting, although they do share a connection through the Darwin family. Baden Powell's father was the first senior clergyman to come out in support of **Charles Darwin's** theory of evolution and supported him in the

most controversial academic debate of the 19th century. Darwin mentions him in *The Origin of the Species*, his most famous work. Charles Darwin's grand-daughter Gwen went to the



Slade School of Art, where she met both her future husband, Jacques Raverat, and Stanley Spencer. Spencer and the Raverats became life long friends. One of Darwin and Professor Powell's most vociferous critics was the Bishop of Oxford, Sam Wilberforce. He had a physical impact on Cookham when he insisted that the high-backed personal pews may parishioners had installed in Holy Trinity Church be removed and replaced with lower and more uniform ones. The building housing the Stanley Spencer Gallery was originally a Methodist Chapel. Later, it was a community reading room and was used for meetings in the early days of Cookham Scout Group. It was converted into a gallery to commemorate

Spencer in 1962. The Young family also link Spencer and Baden Powell, knowing both. Somewhat more obscurely, the painter Augustus John knew Spencer and he and Baden Powell sent their sons to the same school! Darwin's evolutionary ideas were still very controversial at the time of Scouting's foundation, although "social Darwinism" was very common, particularly in the idea that the fate of nations was decided on a "survival of the fittest" basis. Much of the traumatic response to the Boer War derives from the Social Darwinist outlook.

Cycle on down Cookham High Street and when you reach the War Memorial on your left take the causeway that leads across **Cookham Moor**. Stop when you reach the bridge (the highest point on the causeway): **892 853**. From here you get a good view of **Cliveden House**: Cliveden is one of the great Stately Homes of England. A house has stood here since 1666. In 1893, Cliveden was bought by the Astor Family.

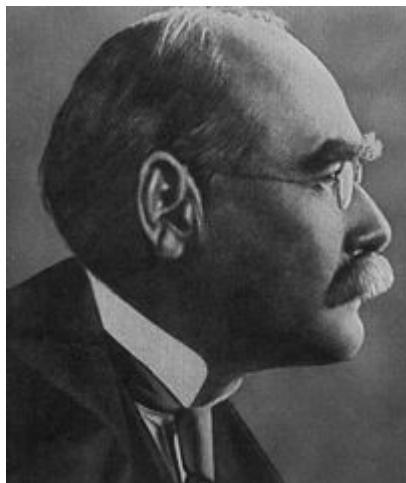
In Scouting for Boys Baden Powell frequently talks about good role models. One of those selected is "the great owner of millions of pounds, J Astor, (who) began his career as a boy-pedlar with seven German flutes as his stock". Astor worked his way up into a fortune and was the grandfather of **Waldorf Astor** who owned Cliveden at the time Baden Powell visited Cookham. Its interesting that the word "millionaire" is not yet common currency, showing how rare such large fortunes were.



Waldorf and **Nancy Astor** (the first woman MP in the House of Commons) made Cliveden a centre of high society. Regular guests included leading politicians such as **Winston Churchill** and **Arthur Balfour** and writers such as **George Bernard Shaw**. (for more about Churchill, read the write-up on Taplow Court later on). Another regular guest was **Rudyard Kipling**. Kipling and Baden Powell had both spent many years working in India, Kipling as a journalist and Baden Powell as a soldier, although they met there only once. Kipling was a War Correspondent during the Boer War in South Africa, where Baden Powell served as a soldier.

Kipling's influence on the early days of Scouting was threefold:

Firstly, *Kim* (1901). Kipling's novel is the story of a boy who acted as a spy in India. The story is re-told at length in the first chapter of *Scouting for Boys*, described as "a good example of what a Boy Scout can do" and *Kim's Game*, mentioned in Kipling's book, became a staple of the Scouting programme.



Secondly, *The Jungle Books* (1894-5) were used as the basis of the Cub Scout programme when Baden Powell founded a section for 8 to 11 years olds in 1916. The first four chapters of *The Wolf Cub's Handbook* are a re-telling of Kipling's book. Even today key parts of the Cub Scout programme (*Akela*, the *Grand Howl*, etc) come straight from Kipling's book.

Thirdly, Kipling kept a connection with Scouting, later writing "*Land and Sea Tales for Scouts and Guides*" by Rudyard Kipling, Commissioner, Boy Scouts"

One thing to note about Baden Powell's use of fictional characters in Scouting (*Kim*, *the Jungle Book*, *Kenneth Grahame's The Golden Age*) is that although we see these as classics now, at the time they were very new. This was a very contemporary selection, the equivalent of using *Harry Potter* books today. Another common theme is the use of young people as the heroes of the book.

Carry on to the end of the causeway, then carefully through the Pound (the narrow stretch of road with speed bumps). At the go straight ahead at the mini roundabout (888 851) and follow this road until you have passed across the railway line. Turn immediately left after this into High Road and follow this road until the end, where it meets Whyteladyes Lane at a T-junction. As you reach the end of High Road the next stop is outside the last house on the right, Hillyers (879 851)

STOP FOUR: HILLYERS ON HIGH ROAD (879 851)

High Road: Hillyers is the big house on the corner of High Road and Whyteladyes Lane

Three former residents of this house have interesting connections to Scouting's Centenary.

Dr Leander Starr Jameson: rented this house in the late 1890s. He was convalescing after his release from prison. A colonial adventurer, Jameson was a key supporter of Cecil Rhodes' campaign for British Empire control of Southern Africa. In 1895 he led the "Jameson Raid", a 600-strong paramilitary expedition. They started from near Mafeking in the British Cape Colony and raided the Boer Republic of the Transvaal, a country Britain was at peace with. The raid ended in failure. Jameson was brought back to the UK in disgrace and briefly imprisoned. The repercussions of the Jameson Raid had a big impact on Baden Powell's military career. The Raid severely damaged relations between the British and the Boers, and started the descent towards war. As War became more likely, BP was sent out to South Africa. His mission was to raise a force that could harry the Boers from the West (much as the Jameson Raid had been intended to do), to draw Boer forces away from the South of the Transvaal where they threatened the colony of Natal. The intention was to buy time for the reinforcement of Natal. When war did break out, the town of Mafeking knew it was vulnerable to Boer attack and called for help. BP took his forces to Mafeking, where his gallant defence of the besieged town made him a national hero.



Guglielmo Marconi was Jameson's distant cousin and came to stay with him at Hillyers in 1897. When Baden Powell returned to Britain from army service abroad in 1899 he found his sister Agnes depressed. His biographer Tim Jeal reports that "she had briefly been courted by Guglielmo Marconi...but nothing had come of it". One reason for Marconi's distraction may have been that he was at a critical juncture in the invention of wireless telegraphy, one of the great scientific and engineering breakthroughs of his time. He had met Agnes through BP and Agnes' brother Baden who was an expert in military observation balloons, which Marconi wanted to use for radio experiments. One of the key strategic benefits of wireless communication would be ship-to-ship communication, obviously a huge opportunity for the world's premier naval power, and the balloons were potentially part of making this work.

In the 1960s, when a tree in the grounds of Hillyers was taken down on safety grounds, a long metal rod was found. The trunk of the tree had grown round it. A frying pan handle was found at the base of the tree and was probably used as an earth. This is probable evidence that while Marconi was in Cookham in 1897 he conducted crucial experiments in wireless communications. Jameson's interest in hosting Marconi was that wireless was seen as a potential breakthrough technology for colonial power in Southern Africa, and his mentor Cecil Rhodes was interested in developments. Marconi later travelled with Jameson to South Africa during the Boer War to look at military applications for his technology. Agnes Baden Powell was later to become president of the critical committee setting up the Girl Guide movement. You can see a plaque on the wall of Hillyers commemorating Marconi's stay (although you would need amazing eyesight to read it from the road)

Within ten years of Jameson and Marconi staying at Hillyers, the house was rented out to **Kenneth Grahame** the writer. We will meet up with him again at our next stop

Cycling Route to Stop 5: Turn left onto Whyteladyes Lane and follow it to the end. Turn right at the T-junction, towards Maidenhead. There is soon a cycle path you can take. Carry on here until the first crossroads at 882 841. Turn right up Long Lane. When this road forks at the top of the hill pull in on the left. You will find a bench and a viewpoint (870 841)

Walking Route to Stop 5: Turn left onto Whyteladyes Lane and follow it to 880 846, the first turning to the right (Lesters Road). At the T junction at the end of this road look out for a footpath sign. The footpath goes between two houses then across the fields to meet Long Lane at 873 841. Turn right onto Long Lane here. When this road forks at the top of the hill turn in on the left. You will find a bench and a viewpoint (870 841)

STOP FIVE : THE MOUNT (870 841)



The Mount: Near the top of Long Lane, there is a view point with a bench. Across the road are two brick gate posts - this is the entrance to a house called The Mount. **Kenneth Grahame** had an unhappy childhood, and the brief period he spent living with his grandmother at The Mount stood out as a happy time against the grim background of his mother's early death and his father's alcoholism. He had a relatively successful business career, becoming Secretary to the Bank of England, until a new Governor in 1908 asked why the Secretary was always away and writing books rather than running the Bank. He had moved into Mayfield on Dean Lane (now the Herries school) in 1906, and in 1907 he wrote a

series of letters in which he created a colourful cast of animal characters. The story was published in book form as "The Wind in the Willows" and the landscape of the book is very much the riverbanks and woodlands of the Thames. Pangbourne and Cookham were both influences, and local historians have even suggested the one-time owner of the Odney Club estate as a prototype for Mr Toad. That would make Lullebrook Manor, the current Odney Club building that you passed earlier on, the prototype for Toad Hall.

But it was an earlier book of Grahame's that most impressed Baden Powell, and his advice to Scout Leaders was clear: "Read The Golden Age by Kenneth Grahame". Tim Jeal, Baden Powell's biographer, wrote that it "summoned up a childhood world freer and more exciting than anything subsequent adult experience could offer". The book is a series of stories told from a child's point of view and the landscape of the book is clearly Cookham Dean. The Golden Age caused a sensation when it was first released because it showed children as energetic, shrewd and imaginative, rather than the placid and submissive children that Victorian fiction had idealised. The book contrasts the riotous outdoor world of children with the world of "Olympians" (adults):

"The existence of these Olympians seemed to be entirely void of interests, even as their movements were confined and slow, and their habits stereotyped and senseless.....they spent the greater part of their time stuffily indoors...We were captured, washed, and forced into clean collars...How could reasonable people spend their precious time so? That was ever our wonder as we bounded forth at last" It was this energy in children that BP saw and wished to encourage. The only exception to this adult behaviour is the local curate, clearly based on Grahame's own uncle David Ingles, curate at Cookham Dean Church, who introduced Grahame to the joys of "messing about in Boats"

From the viewpoint, you can see three landmarks with Scouting links:

- **Windsor Castle** (at about 130 degrees) is an official residence of our Patron, Her Majesty the Queen, and annual scene of the St George's Day parade of Queens Scouts.
- **Taplow court** (at about 120 degrees) is only occasionally open to the public and so most of the time the best view of the House is from this side of the River.
- **Eton**, on the horizon between Windsor Castle and Taplow Court

Taplow Court, overlooking Maidenhead from the Buckinghamshire side of the Thames, was the home of William Grenfell, first Lord Desborough. A politician, sportsman and the primary organiser of the London Olympics of 1908, he gave his name to a Maidenhead School. He swam the Niagra rapids, rowed across the Channel, climbed the Matterhorn and reigned as punting champion of the Thames. He was the second cousin of Field Marshall **Francis Wallace Grenfell**, 1st Baron Grenfell, soldier, archaeologist and Egyptologist, who was a senior officer in the army when Baden Powell started his military career and encouraged him in amateur theatrical activities around the garrison. Tim Jeal, BP's biographer writes: "he persuaded Stephe (BP) to give a series of comic lectures on subjects such as Ancient Roman Barrel Engines and Steam Engines of All Sorts. Apart from making him known to every senior officer at the camp, these lectures had the virtue of being repeatable to different audiences in the future". Such Amateur theatrical activity became a passion of Baden Powell's, one of the things he was known for in the Army and that helped to make him a larger than life character. He was always a showman, and that was to prove very important in inspiring people to join Scouts and in getting the publicity that Scouting needed to grow.

The Grenfells were famous for weekend house parties at Taplow Court. Among their guests were several people with a connection to Baden Powell:

Winston Churchill was a regular house guest of the Desboroughs at Taplow Court and at least twice ended up swimming in the Thames fully clothed during boisterous weekend house

parties. Baden Powell was one of the figures that Churchill wrote about in his book "Great Contemporaries": Churchill first saw Baden Powell in India when both were soldiers there in the 1890s. He wrote: "In the evening an amateur vaudeville entertainment was given...the feature of this was a sprightly song and dance by an officer of the garrison, attired in the brilliant uniform of an Austrian Hussar...I was struck by the quality of the performance, which certainly would have held its own on the boards of any of our music-halls". It was very unusual in those days for a rising young officer to appear in such an informal setting in front of the regiment. The two men were also both in South Africa at the time of the Boer War. Churchill met Baden Powell again immediately after the relief of Mafeking when Churchill interviewed him for the Morning Post. General Buller, one of the key army commanders, would rather have had both men on his military staff, writing of Churchill: "I wish he were leading regular troops, rather than writing for a rotten paper". The two continued to bump into each other over the years and Churchill held him in high regard, believing that in one or two hundred years' time Scouting would still be around "guiding and shaping the lives and thoughts of men"



JM Barrie: The writer of Peter Pan was also a visitor to Taplow Court. BP saw the play when it was first staged in 1905 and was so impressed he went back the following night to see it again. He was 48 years old at the time. In one of the first letters he wrote to Olave, his future wife, he says he wants to take her to see the play and asked her if she was "perhaps Wendy". He named his son Peter after the hero. He saw the play many times over the years and biographers have seen in BP an element of "the boy who never grew up".

Lord Kitchener was a regular visitor to the Grenfells, always spending the first week of his army leave at Taplow Court. Herbert Kitchener was a senior army officer in South Africa throughout the Boer War, ending up as Commander in Chief, although he was no great fan of Baden Powell, and no champion of his career. During World War One Kitchener was the Secretary of State for War and the face on the famous "Your Country Needs You" poster. BP went to visit him to ask about a return to an Army role. Kitchener told him that he could be of more use organising Scouts to assist with the War. This they did, both on the home front (where they acted as messengers, look-outs and coastguards) and in France, where Baden Powell organised Scouters and ex-Scouts to run "Scout Huts", recreation centres for Troops resting after Front Line combat. BP himself worked in these centres.



Eton: Visible on the horizon between Taplow court and Windsor Castle is the village of Eton, which is dominated by Eton College. In November 1904 Baden Powell gave a lecture to the cadet force at Eton College. This was almost exactly half way between his return home to England after the Boer War and the camp on Brownsea Island. He lectured on "soldiering" but referred to scouting techniques such as tracking, judging distances, taking cover, etc, alongside more typical cadet force pastimes as shooting and skirmishing. He recommended they read Conan Doyle's "The White Company", which is also mentioned in "Scouting for Boys". He suggested an oath for boys to take that started "I promise, on my honour". Some of the foundations of Scouting were falling into place in his mind. He encouraged each cadet to go home in the holidays to recruit and train up a squad of ten boys, and to report to him on progress. No news came. Clearly, some elements of the programme that was to be so successful still had not emerged. In fact, Scouting techniques at the time were spreading far more successfully through accident than design. Boys Brigades and Youth Clubs had caught onto his military handbook "Aids to Scouting" and were incorporating it into their programmes. The proof copy of the book had left for the publishers on one of the last trains out of Mafeking

before the seige. BP's heroic status after the seige brought this military textbook unexpected cult status.

The earliest record I can find of a Scout Camp in Cookham took place in 1910 somewhere in Cookham Dean when 30 Scouts from the 60th South West London camped for a fortnight in 1910.

From here it is easy to return to the start of the Tour. Reversing the route is one easy and short way. Alternatively, you can extend your walk using the 60 miles of footpaths that thread through Cookham, some of which are also cycle-suited bridleways.

SUMMARY:

At the end of this tour there may be some questions in people's minds. One question is: "why can so many influences on BP be traced to such a small area?" I think there are three reasons:

- 1) Most of these people wanted to influence public policy or the cultural life of their country. They needed access to the seats of power. Cookham and Maidenhead were rail connected to central London which made it easy for the locals to visit London and for London to visit the locals at places like Cliveden and Taplow Court. Eton and Windsor were long-established centres of power and influence
- 2) For those who were residents rather than visitors, most had a clear preference for rural life over urban life, which drove them or their ancestors to settle in the area.
- 3) The social and political world of early twentieth century Britain was concentrated on the upper middle class areas of London and the South East. These people lived in a confined social world, as the remarkable number of almost accidental connections between them shows. Ironically, this network did not extend across most of the British Isles but did extend across far-flung corners of the Empire.

Some of the people met on this tour are just acquaintances or distant influences, but others were major influences on Baden Powell and the birth of Scouting. I think there are 9 with a significant influence on BP's life and thinking: Geoffrey Winthrop Young, Roger Pocock, Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling, Kenneth Grahame, Francis Grenfell, JM Barrie, Herbert Kitchener and Leander Starr Jameson.

All were British. All were men. Four of the nine lived locally while the other five visited the great houses of the area. Four are quoted or referenced in Baden Powell's scouting writings.

Five played roles in the Boer War and six had substantial imperial careers. Four helped ensure activities were included in the Scouting programme. Four met directly with Baden Powell to talk about the role that Scouting could play, either at its foundation or later.

All in all a remarkable trawl for a tracking expedition looking for signs of Scouting's birth in one Thames Valley village.

Baden Powell enjoyed his visits to Cookham in 1905 and 1906, writing to the Youngs after the first trip that "I did not at all like coming away from your island of delights".