

Lady Baden Powell.

Speaks to Local Girl
Guides.

COURTESY WANTED.

PLEA FOR RETURN OF EARLY
VICTORIAN MANNERS.

Lady Baden Powell gave a very interesting explanation of the Girl Guides' movement at a public meeting in the Ambulance Hall on Wednesday evening.

There was a good attendance in spite of the fact that it was Tradesmen's holidays.

The Mayor (Ald. J.R. Birkett) presided, and he was supported on the platform by Mrs Percy Birley (County Commissioner), Mrs Isaac Storey, Caton, Lady Sanderson, Mrs H.H.P. Lane, Miss Dorothy Bardsley, Lancaster (County Secretary and Treasurer), Miss Hilda Bardsley (Camp Adviser), Miss Appleford (Divisional Secretary), Miss Haskard, Dr H.F. Oldham, J.P., M.B.E., and the Vicar of St John's (the Rev. D.C. Kennedy, M.A.)

Letters of apology for non-attendance were received from General Hibbert, Rev. Seymour Scott and Mrs Scott and Miss Hayes.

The Mayor on Discipline for Girls

The Mayor welcomed her ladyship on behalf of the town, and it was very good of her to come and explain the movement. Her work was in some ways similar to her husband's, General Baden Powell, for just as he takes an interest in the boys, so in a like manner did her Ladyship take an interest in the girls. It was a very good thing that the girls should be brought up with a discipline and a general method, so that they would be able to take a better part in the world – (applause).

LADY BADEN POWELL'S
SPEECH.

Lady Baden Powell, who had a good reception, expressed her thanks to the Mayor, and proceeded to say that the Girl Guide movement was one which ought to interest grown-up women, because of their new responsibilities consequent upon them having the vote¹.

Personally, she did not care about the vote, and would not use it, because she thought the vote and politics were quite outside woman's domain. At the same time, she did not say that work of a political nature was outside their domain, because it was up to every woman to use her influence for the good of the country.

She did not consider politics good for the country, and therefore she said "leave them alone". The Girl Guide movement was quite non-party and non-political.

The Outcome of Scouting.

Her Ladyship then dealt at length with the organisation and foundation of the Boy Scout movement by her husband, and stated that Guiding was really the natural outcome of Scouting. It was in 1909 that the first Girl Guides were formed, but they were really a travesty of what the Girl Guides are now, because they wore their mothers' clothes and hats and had no recognised dress.

In 1915 the Girl Guides were given their Charter, which made it a recognised movement, and from that time it had made steady progress, growing from nothing to a big organisation. The girls wanted it, and sensible, splendid women – the flower of England, she would call them – came forward and put their shoulders to the wheel, because they saw the good there was in the movement.

From nothing the Girl Guides had become a great organisation, and they had now 400,000 members throughout the world – (applause).

Out to Help Parents and Public.

Girl Guides wanted to help parents and the public; they were simply a voluntary organisation run by voluntary people; it was a great game; a school, but outside school walls. If they would consider the large number of holidays that children had to spare, they would recognise what a lot of waste time they were having, but here was where the Girl Guides stepped into the breach and provided training, recreation and instruction for the girls in their spare time. They were also out to help the teachers, because teachers in this country had a very uphill task. They wanted to help the pastors of the churches and chapels, and they were strictly inter-denominational.

There was

no class distinction

in the organisation- she hated the word "class"- but they were all a happy family of sisters each working for the good of the whole.

Her Ladyship then explained the several definite branches of the organisation, and said they could take members from 8 to 81 years of age. At 8 children had a very vivid imagination, and that was the time to teach them to think for (*sic*) other people, and not for themselves.

At the age of 11 a girl was admitted as a full blown Guide. Another interesting feature was that invalid and crippled girls had recently been allowed to join the movement, and many letters testified to the beneficial results. It was felt that by having an outside interest these crippled and invalid children might not always be thinking about their own ailments and difficulties, and the training was an extra interest which made them feel like normal people. The speaker mentioned that at a recent rally she saw marches past on crutches, in bath chairs and blind children.

Some Fallacies Exploded.

After giving facts regarding the overseas branch, the speaker said on first joining the girls were taught how to tie knots. Some

may say "How silly that is for a girl; what did she want with learning to tie knots." Well it developed concentration of mind, and was also very useful when used in the right way or the right place. The next thing was to learn the composition of the Union Jack. It was wonderful how few people were interested in their own national flag. In the Girl Guides they were taught its history and what it stood for. They also paid a great deal of attention to first aid, and she did not know of any other girls' society what (*sic*) taught first aid. It was a most important thing.

Not a Military Movement.

They did a certain amount of signalling, which had been very much criticised. They did a little company drill, and some people at once said they were a military movement, but they were nothing of the sort. It was very good to have drill sometimes, even for girls.

The Ten Guide Laws.

There were 10 laws which each Guide was expected to keep. "We never say to a Guide," continued her Ladyship, "you shan't do this and you must not do that, because if you do they are sure to want and go and do it. We are trying to create a sense of responsibility of girls. I am a great believer in girls, and am quite sure that their leanings are in the right direction, and if you put the responsibility on the girl herself she is more likely to go in the right direction. Of course, I'm not going to say all Girl Guides are angels; there may be some here and there who go wrong.

The second law was to be loyal to other people, and not going about telling tales. Tongues were apt to run loose, especially when young. The third was helpfulness, and in order to be helpful the girls had to be taught how. Friendliness was the fourth rule - a Guide was the friend of everyone.

A Shameful Thing.

The fifth was obedience, and the sixth was that every Guide should be kind to dumb animals. It seemed a shameful thing that in this 20th century in a supposed highly civilised country they should need a

society known as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals – a splendid organisation which was doing a great work.

Rushing Misplaces Courtesy.

The seventh law was courtesy. People were in such a rush and hurry that she could not help thinking what an extraordinary world it was; there was no time for any courtesy. People were either rushing about to catch the train or tram or going to business, and she thought it a great pity that that very great charm of our grandmothers should be quite forgotten. She hoped that the pendulum would swing back, and that they might have some of the Early Victorian courtesies and manners brought back.

People Who Revel in Ill-Health

“Be Careful” was the eighth law, and in explaining this her Ladyship created some amusement by remarking that it was wonderful the number of people who simply revelled in ill-health and gloom.

The Girl Guide movement was there to make children happy and to show a cheery face even under suffering and difficulties. Another point in this law was to encourage self-control, because the lack of self-control was the root of every evil they had in the country at the present. The ninth law was purity. God had given the girl a clean healthy body, and it was her duty to keep it so – (hear, hear).

They also wanted to encourage thrift, in order to put something away for a rainy day, and perhaps help a lame dog over a stile.

In conclusion, Lady Baden-Powell said it would not be for 10, 20 or even 30 years that the country would see the benefit of the Girl Guide organisation, and she wished to ask them: If you see any good in the movement, then I ask you to back it for all you are worth – (applause).

Looking to the Younger Generation.

Dr Oldham, in moving a vote of thanks, said there was a state of chaos through the ranks of society, work, business and commerce. To put that right a great effort

on the part of everyone was necessary, and whilst the older people could do very much towards that end, it was to the younger generation they must look to first to set right the great problem that faced us. Her Ladyship had made reference to the schools, which she said were very admirable. But one of the greatest faults and difficulties in our schools was that the classes were too large. He was pleased to see that the Guide movement had recognised that smaller were better and more efficient than larger ones.

Mrs Isaac Storey seconded, and the vote was carried with enthusiasm.

Appreciation for Boys’ Brigade.

The Rev. Ivor J. Gash, on behalf of the Parish Church Boys’ Brigade, expressed appreciation of her Ladyship’s reference to the Brigade, and assured her that the Boys’ Brigade would work along both with the Guide and Scout organisations. It was not possible to measure how much the country owed to General Baden-Powell for introducing the Scout movement, and later to Lady Baden-Powell for starting the magnificent Girl Guide organisation – (applause).

Mrs Birley, in proposing a vote of thanks to the Mayor, referred to the generous support that had been given by the St. John Ambulance, - the Rev. D.C. Kennedy was to second the vote, but Mr Mills rose from the audience and forestalled him.

At the conclusion Lady Baden-Powell was presented with a bouquet by two Brownies of the 1st Morecambe Company – Miss Barbara Robinson and Miss Florence Wilson.

¹ Representation of the People Act 1918

Political movement towards women's suffrage began during the war and in 1918, Parliament passed an act (the Representation of the People Act 1918) granting the vote to women over the age of 30 who were householders, the wives of householders, occupiers of property with an annual rent of £5, and graduates of British universities.