

Baden-Powell at Fletching

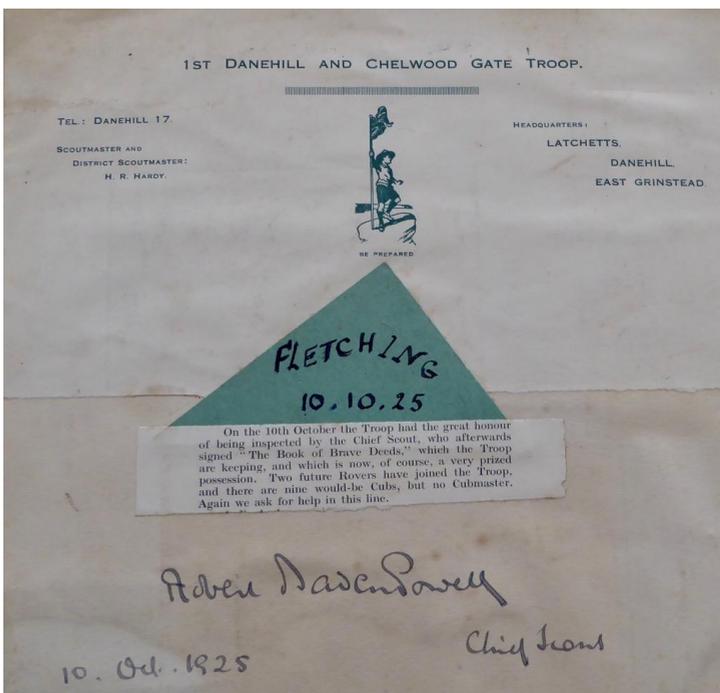
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Some time ago the late Laurence Hardy let me borrow his father's photo album and log book about the Scouts, and I sent to a friend who lives in Newick, a photo with the caption "this photo is of Lord Baden Powell at Newick". This information had been told to me by a former scout master but it then quickly became apparent that whilst it was indeed Lord Baden Powell in the photo, the Scout Hut was at Fletching not Newick.

In October 1925 Lord Robert Baden-Powell declared open a new Scout Hut which Mr Soames of Sheffield Park had given to the Fletching Boy Scouts. There were a number of local detachments at the ceremony - the Fletching Troop was under Scoutmaster W A Dodson and Assistant Scoutmaster R Bielby and Danehill Scouts were under Scoutmaster Ronald Hardy.

The scouts formed up on either side of the road outside the hut, which was an artistic corrugated iron board-lined building containing a large and small room. The sounding of the General Salute and three hearty cheers announced the arrival of



the Chief Scout (Lord Baden-Powell) together with Mr and Mrs Soames amongst others.

This photo, from 1927, is of Scoutmaster Ronald Hardy.

It was stated that with such a good scout hut the Scouts could meet two or three times a week which was an immense advantage.

Mr Soames said the hut had been erected by his own workmen for the Fletching Boy Scouts and Sir Robert was given a gold key to unlock the door. The Vicar of Fletching (the Rev T Roberts (who is to the left of Lord Baden Powell in the first photo) dedicated the building and Scoutmaster Dodson who was resigning at the end of the month was presented with a handsome walnut escritoire. Mr Barden would be taking over the command of the Fletching Troop.



This photo is of the Troops being inspected. Could the lady be Mrs Soames, or perhaps even Lady Baden Powell who married Lord Baden Powell in 1912? Her maiden name was Soames, her father being Harold Soames related to the Soames' of Sheffield Park. As newspaper reports mention only Mrs Soames, it probably is more likely to be her.

The Boy Scout movement spread not only over the Empire, where there were half a million scouts, but through every civilised country there were scouts, all wearing the same



style of clothes. They would have peace at home because scouts belonged to every class and every colour.

Mr G M Maryon-Wilson proposed a Vote of Thanks to Sir Robert for the kindness he had shown them that day and to Mr Soames for the gift of the hut and later the troops were entertained to tea in the schoolroom.

What happened to the Scout Hut? All traces of it have now gone although it was certainly still there in 1944 and was used by the Youth Club and the Farmers for their meetings. It's thought there was a fire (arson?) which probably finished it off.

My thanks to Mary Butterfield, Sonia Harriyott, Peter Richardson, Tony Turk and the late Laurence Hardy.