

MONBULK GUIDES ARE BORN. WAS THIS THE FIRST LADY STRADBROKE CUP?

On 6th May 1972 at the presentation of our first two Queen's Guides, Mrs. Kathleen Wellington, the original Guide Captain, was asked to share some of our history with us. Mr. and Mrs. Wellington were present but she felt too frail (in her 80s) to present the story. It was read on her behalf by Mrs. Dorothy Rich.

I have been asked to tell you something about the coming of guiding to Monbulk. It was all a matter of dreams. Two English girls got together in the hills and, thinking the conditions here were ideal for Girl Guiding, they began to dream it up between them. Few of us really knew what they were talking about but there was soon a new and delightful interest for us.

When I remember what delighted us in the 1920's I fear you may sniff when you contrast it with the wonderful capers you get up to these days.

Mrs. Gertrude Reid lived at Kallista and from her we learnt much and then went to her home for our tests.

Mrs Mountain settled in Sherbrooke, the grounds of "Grendon" ran down the hill in wide terraces and there we held gala days. On the top lawn sat the visitors, and down below the guides paraded and carried out stunts and competitions. This provided us with the opportunity to work with the other three mountain companies, Kallista, Belgrave and Fern Tree Gully.

Now and then the wife of our state Governor would visit us. The weather could be glorious, but we remember when a great storm blew us into the big house. The guides manning the outside stalls had to have their coats and hats dried at the kitchen range and they appeared before her Excellency Lady Stradbroke a sorry sight!!

A highlight of such a day was the four mile walk to "Grendon." We strolled along the tourist track, by the creek and fern and wattle. We talked and sang and took time to stand and stare at our beautiful world. One day we came home proudly chanting "We won the cup! We won the cup!"

Holidays meant simple unhurried wanderings. We would find a nice level spot where we could play games. One of these was lost forever when the Silvan Dam flowed over it. Sometimes we would meet up with the Kallista Guides and exchange ideas and exercise on one of the camping grounds.

Our most ambitious fling outside Monbulk was to enter a piece of local colour at a Guide exhibition held in the Lower Town Hall in Melbourne. The girls set up a bark hut standing in a garden of local plants, ferns, mosses and fungi. They were wonderful days when we had the reward of seeing adults and children showing great interest in our work. We sprayed it at intervals and it glittered under the bright lights.

Meetings held out-of-doors always meant a lively program, but in bad weather, there was much to do in our "Kipsie" as we named our little home. Then we had story time and learned of the Guide movement in other parts of the world and we sang our songs and rounds etc.

In the beginning I was asked to act as Lieutenant to our First Captain Miss Miarry(?) Jones. Her mother led a very fine Local Association and her sister, Gertrude, made up the enthusiastic trio. But ill-health forced Miss Jones to resign and I became Captain. Some fifteen years passed and more brownies, Guides and Ranges and leaders swelled the ranks. But how suddenly can storms and disruptions appear!

When World War 2 broke out, Guides left the Hills. Then the Upwey High School took our girls of Guide age to fresh pastures and new. I found myself with a brand new uniform and no Company. We are still in touch with Guides who have moved away.

Many have distinguished themselves in various ways. Fortunately some did remain in this District and they have succeeded in reviving interest in the Movement. Here is an interesting record- Mrs. Phil Camm senior, who helped to build up this early history now encourages two more generations of her family. Scout, Phil junior, married Guide, Freda. Now their daughter Maree and her family are carrying on the tradition of nearly 50 years. Another story comes from The Patch. A very fine Lieutenant, Dorothy Allen, now Mrs. Bert Smith moved to Horsham District. She became Guide Commissioner, her husband Scout Leader, and her family, also committed to compete the picture. We know there will always be enough men and women to dream dreams. Their dreams are the sails called Hope, Faith and Endeavour which we fling to the Winds of Time and find that our dreams come true.

In those bygone (days) we had grand opportunities of meeting such people as members of the Royal Family, Lord and Lady Baden Powell, and many world leaders of Scouts and Guides as well as fine Australians. Through their years of service, these dedicated fold cast upon the road ahead of us, a bright light of encouragement and a desire to be worthy.

I earnestly hope that the girls of today will respond to the touch of the world outside, and learn the joy of giving as well as receiving. A wonderful Guide from England Miss Behrens, left us this quotation "Life will never be dull again when once we fling the windows wide and know, we are wanted for the service of The King"

With Guide greeting
and Best Wishes

Kathleen B Wellington
nee Armstrong.