

# The Iconic Gilwell Park

## Totem Poles at Gilwell

Our Heritage listed totems represent some of the most outstanding features to be found at Gilwell Park.

Totems tell a story about an important event or person, a favourite fable, lesson learned, belief or origin of a tribe, clan or particular family. The North American Indians are known to have carved totems in the 1700's. There are 5 totems in the grounds of Gilwell.

The earliest was carved by Edgar Derrick and Sam Wilkinson and it is recorded that when B.P visited Gilwell in 1931, whilst it was being carved, he signed the totem. The signature was subsequently chiselled into the timber and it remains today.

The second totem was carved by 1st Footscray in 1949 and originally was part of their campsite Gateway on Forest Path. In 1994 the pole was restored and placed in position alongside The Lodge.



There are 3 other totems, and they mark the entrance to the Office and No.1 car park. The 1st totem was carved by the Footscray Old Boys in 2005 as was the 2nd later in 2007. The 3rd was carved by Max Martin, a former G.L of 1st Nunawading, on behalf of the Baden Powell Masonic Lodge. The Totem was erected in August 2009.

Each of the totems, as convention dictates, tells the story of a groups experience at Gilwell Park. There are 10 brackets in total located at the entrance representing the original 10 Scout Laws. There are 7 brackets available for your group's history. You are invited to immortalize your group or district's experiences at Gilwell by carving a totem and adding it to the formal entrance to Gilwell Park.

## Akela Has Returned to Gilwell Park



One of the wonderful things about Gilwell is the sudden appearance of the unexpected when walking around the Park. Take a stroll down Somers walk to the Council Rock above the Lochan and if you are very quiet you will be rewarded by the sight of Akela.

What a perfect place for your pack to celebrate an important milestone in the life of a cub or leader. If you are fortunate enough to be camping at Gilwell a visit to this area and a Grand Howl is mandatory.

Akela or the Grey Wolf was carved a few years ago and has at last been placed at the foot of the large granite boulder, known as Council Rock, by the Gilwell Heritage team.



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## The Lone Scouts

If you are wandering around Gilwell Park you may come across the building pictured above. This hut was erected in 1937 for the Lone Scout section. and named the Cleve Cole Memorial Hut, in memory of the late Lone Scout Commissioner. Just prior to Easter 1939 the finishing touches were put to this hut, paths were made, a flag pole erected on the parade ground and a picket fence completed. At Easter that year the Lone Scout camping ground was then officially opened by Mr. GWS Anderson.



Cleve Cole Memorial Hut

Cleveland John Melbourne Cole was Scoutmaster of the 1st North Fitzroy Troop when he visited the "Coming of Age" Arrowe Park Jamboree, England in 1929. After talking with the Canadian Lone Scouts there, he set about starting up the Victorian Lone Scout Section. He was appointed Commissioner for Lone Scouts in 1929 and the section gathered momentum under his leadership. Lone Scouts were those who were not able to attend regular scout meetings due to their location and were kept in touch with the movement by correspondence and by visits from Cleve and his leaders. Tragically Cleve passed away in 1936 in an ill fated attempt to traverse the Bogong High Plains in winter.



Cleve Cole

The Lone Scout site at the 1934-35 Frankston Jamboree attracted much attention because the front fence consisting of ornamental pickets carved by members of the section. Even members who could not attend had sent their pickets to represent them. After the Jamboree the fence was transferred to the Lone Scout site at Gilwell Park where it made an impressive gateway.

The pickets became a tradition and each Lone Scout was expected carve one and send it to Gilwell to represent him at the Lone Scout campsite. At the annual Easter Camp or "Oordiyalyal" the picket fence at the gateway to the Lone Scout site was quite an attraction to visitors. The pickets also made an unusual gateway at subsequent Jamborees.

The picket on the right of the picture was carved by a leader at the time John "Kanga" Rebbechi.

*Our thanks to John Rebbechi for assistance with much of this information.*

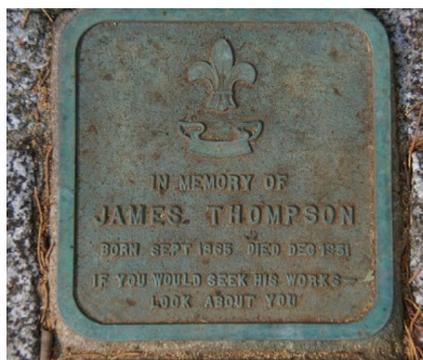


## His Works are all About You

A lovely feature of Gilwell Park, as anyone who visits will notice, are the very attractive stone gateways.

The first warden of Gilwell, Mr C A "Arch" Hoadley, went to great lengths to beautify Gilwell with ornamental trees and gateways and, although many of the trees didn't survive due to the local environment, we are still blessed with these impressive gateways.

The creator of most of these structures was one James Thompson, a retired stonemason from Footscray, and his memorial plaque can be seen in the Gilwell Park chapel. As well as several of the gateways he also built the altar, side table, side walls and entrance columns to the Chapel. Next time you visit Gilwell, if you are very observant, you will discover a stonemason's mark chiselled into the hinge face of the pillar on the right hand side of the Luxton gates.



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## By Train & Trek Cart

Next time you hop into your car and travel to Gilwell, spare a thought for the difficulties your predecessors faced. The journey became part of the adventure, which was camping at Gilwell.



In the 1920's the area around Gembrook was primarily used for logging and then farming. Gilwell Park campsite was the brainchild of Tom Russell whose family owned, logged and farmed the land. Its future was uncertain as at first the Scout Association was concerned that the only way into the campsite was an old logging track from Gembrook. But fortunately the adventurous character of those early Scouts prevailed.

Few people owned a car but by this time the narrow gauge Puffing Billy line from Ferntree Gully to Gembrook had been built to convey logs, produce and people back to the Melbourne markets. Eager Scouts would climb aboard with all their gear in a trek cart which was placed in the guards van. On arrival at Gembrook they would have to pull or push their trek cart the 6 kms downhill to Gilwell, no doubt singing all the way. All repeated at the end of the camp of course, but this time uphill!

As time went by the track into Gilwell improved enough to allow better motorised access but still transport by car was not always possible. Some of you might remember piling the troop into the back of a local furniture van. Patrol boxes were used for seats but there were no safety belts! Now for large events Scouts arrive by the coachload, - what a difference.



Travelling to Gilwell Park was once a considerable challenge with many of us breathing a sigh of relief when the last rut and pothole was safely negotiated. The journey might be easy now, but spare a thought for the good old days!



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## The days before comfort - Patrol Huts at Gilwell

Many of us, over the years, have attended leader training courses at Gilwell and have done so in relative comfort. Spare a thought, however, for those Scouters attending Gilwell in the early days.

An early feature of the scouter training courses at Gilwell Park were the patrol huts – the first buildings to be erected at Gilwell. These huts were built by Tom Russell in 1925 out of rough hewn timber, from the family saw mill, on a suspended wooden floor and included a landing or verandah at the front with access by means of a log at the front with the top chopped flat. One noticeable feature of these unlined structures was the weatherproofing of the walls with creosote which gave the huts their distinctive black look. The early huts had no bunks, so sleeping arrangements consisted of horse hair mattresses on the wooden floor. There were no windows but the space between the eaves and the walls was filled in with wire mesh and, once bunks were installed, anyone who has slept in the top one will recall the icy breeze wafting over his bed on a chilly night.



Bush Dining Shelter



Morning Ablutions

Cooking was done on an open fire, on a patrol basis, and the dining facilities consisted of a rough bush frame covered in leafy branches whilst the morning ablutions were carried out beside Clarke's creek. Proper dining shelters were later constructed in a similar manner to the sleeping huts, but with fly wire from about chest height up to the eaves. The fly wire was very effective in keeping the flies IN.

There were four original sites (in the Hoadley Hall area) allocated to the Pidgeons, Peckers, Cuckoos and Owls, as they are today, but the old huts have long since been eaten up by the termites to be replaced with brick structures in 1963 as a result of a bequest from the Angus Mitchell estate. They were named the Angus Mitchell Memorial Huts.

Another set of four wooden huts and dining shelters was constructed in the 1970's along the boundary fence on the eastern side of the training ground.



A patrol outside one of the very early 'Cuckoo's' huts watches an exhibition of rope spinning



The 'Cuckoo's' patrol site



Patrol Cooking

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## The Lodge - Recollections of Arch Hoadley's son Jack

"The Lodge at Gilwell Park always felt like Dad's country retreat. The back door led into a dark and depressing kitchen with its ancient sink and sole cold water tap under the window. The pantry cupboards were always standing in jam jars partially filled with water.

The lounge/ dining room was reasonably well lit by the large windows. The wonderful brick fireplace was a crafted thing of beauty. I loved the curve of the arch and the round cornered bricks that defined the firegrate. The fireplace was equipped with a huge black kettle and a couple of immense black cast-iron cooking pots. The walls were timber panelled, stained to match the exposed beams. The floor was uncovered and unpolished timber."

"Two bedrooms with shutters on the windows but no glass and a small bathroom completed the cottage. Bathing was a late afternoon activity in the claw foot cast iron bath with water heated over the fire. Lighting was kerosene lamps and candles."

