

Gilwell Park Bushwalking

Scouting History Walk – Eastern Side

How Gilwell Park came about:

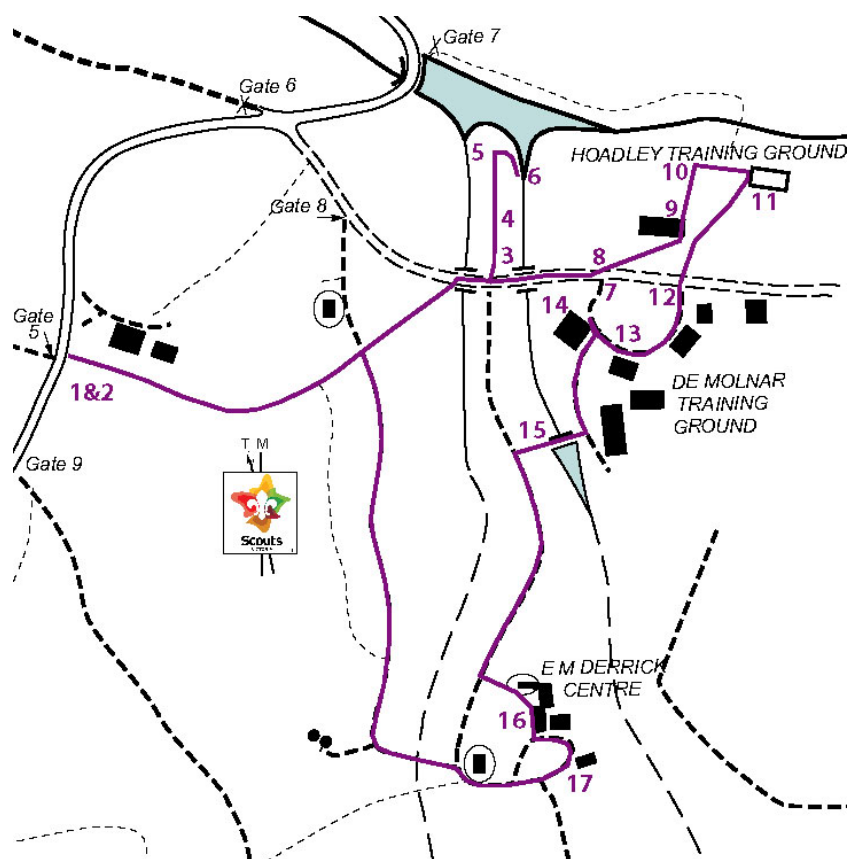
Gilwell in England received its name from the estate just out of London donated to the Chief Scout of the World, Baden-Powell, in 1919 by Mr de Bois Maclaren; as a camping ground for London Scouts and a Training Ground for Scout Leaders.

In 1924, several Victorian Leaders attended the Wembley Jamboree and, afterwards, qualified for their 'Wood Badge' at courses held at this camp. Two of the Leaders were so outstanding that they were recommended to be Deputy Camp Chiefs (DCC) - ones qualified to run similar courses. These were Mr C.A. (Arch) Hoadley and Mr E.H.C. (Tom) Russell. They then ran the first Victorian Course at Lilydale in 1925.

Mr Russell decided that Scouting needed a permanent Training Camp. So, on his mother's property near Gembrook, he built four sleeping huts, the centre part of the existing Russell Troop Hall (which was called Group Hall), also a chapel and named the camp Gilwell after its English namesake. The second Wood Badge course was held here in January 1926, after which Mrs Russell donated the eleven acres to the Scout Association.

This Scout History Trail takes approximately 45 to 60 minutes and leads you through developments made, over time, by many Scouters, the Gilwell Park we enjoy today. Refer to the map below and start from point 1. GPS locations are shown in [Brackets].

The following pages provide information on the points shown.



1 & 2 - The Chief's Approach

[S37°55'03.4" E145°34'24.3"]

The Hoadley Gates heralds the start of The Chief's Approach. The Chief's Approach was named after Lord Baden Powell's stay here at Gilwell Park in 1931 and 1935. BP slept overnight in the Lodge (Boys' Field) located on the west side of Launching Place Road. Each day he would walk this track to the Training ground so as you take this path you are walking in the steps of BP.



3 & 4 - The Gippsland Gates and Somers Walk

[S37°55'03.0" E145°34'37.6"]

Were named in honour of Lord Somers, Chief Scout and Governor of Victoria. He succeeded Lord Baden-Powell as Chief Scout in 1941. Lord Somers enjoyed roaming the creeks and forests, learning by observation all he could of the birds, trees and local wildlife.

The stonework materials for the Somers' Gate were funded by the Gippsland County camp organised by the Rev E. F. Cooper DCC and constructed by Mr J Thompson. The wrought-iron gate, erected in 1933, was a gift from metal craftsman Mr Cameron, an instructor from Footscray Technical School. The path beyond is Somers' Walk.



5 - Council Rock

[S37°55'00.4" E145°34'38.2"]

Somers walk leads to Council Rock, which is a granite tor commonly found throughout Gilwell Park. The name comes from "The Jungle Book Story" by Rudyard Kipling, where Wolf Pack Councils were held. In the story "Akela", the great grey Lone Wolf, who led all the Pack by strength and cunning, would give his council. The Cub Scout section of the Scouting movement uses the Jungle Book Story as a basis for youth programs and training.



6 - The Lochan and "The Howard Spensley Pool"

[S37°55'00.0" E145°34'38.5"]

Mr Russell worked with the then Berwick Council to have a wooden bridge over Clark Creek replaced by an earth bank with the BSA providing the pipe and valve for an outlet thus providing a small lake suitable for swimming. It was named the Lochan, Scottish, for "Little Lake". The swimming pool was first enjoyed at the 4th Woodbadge Course in 1928.



In 1936, the County Commissioner from Bedfordshire, England, Mr Howard Spensley, visited Gilwell and heard from Mr Hoadley of a project to concrete a shallow pool in Head Quarters Creek (now called Whipbird Gully), where it enters the Lochan for the use of non-swimmers and beginners. Mr Spensley immediately offered to donate the cost of the concrete materials required. This was named "The Howard Spensley Pool".

7 - Luxton Gates

[S37°55'03.5" E145°34'40.9"]

Named after Councillor H.D. Luxton, Lord Mayor of Melbourne in 1931 and chairman of the then Federal Scout Council. These gates formed the entrance to the training grounds and were part of works by Mr J Thompson.



8 - Kennedy Gates

[S37°55'03.8" E145°34'41.0"]

These gates are one of a number of memorials to Mr W. D. Kennedy "Kenno" who was one of the original Woodbadge course trainees at Gilwell Park. The following year Mr Kennedy became DCC and started his long association with Gilwell Park.

"Kenno" was Gilwell Park's Warden from 1947 to 1964 and contributed greatly to its ongoing development.



9 - Hoadley Memorial Hall

[S37°55'02.6" E145°34'43.0"]

Opened in Easter 1955 by Sir Edmond Herring in recognition to the contribution Mr Hoadley (Arch) had made to Scouting, building relationships and, in particular, to the development of Gilwell Park.

Mr Hoadley was Gilwell Park's first Warden commencing in 1937 until 1947.



Mr Hoadley was a member of the 1911 Australasian Antarctic Expedition led by Douglas Mawson. His sledge and stocks were donated to Victoria's Museum.

The hall includes an office and library, was designed by Mr L. M. Perrott, built by Mr Hansen from Hansen and Yunken, from a bequest by Brychall brothers, neighbours of Gilwell when Arch Hoadley was there.

10 - Camp Fire Circle and Totem

[S37°55'01.0" E145°34'43.9"]

The camp fire circle has been used on Leader Training courses since the training area was established by Mr Tom Russell.



The Totem pole was being carved by Messrs Sam Wilkinson and Edgar Derrick when BP visited in 1931. BP signed in pencil the main shaft of Indian Teak wood which was then carved with a chisel to preserve it. The Totem was erected by the 9th Woodbadge course in September 1931. See if you can see what BP wrote.

11 - Chapel

[S37°55'01.2" E145°34'45.6"]

The original Chapel was built by Mr Tom Russell. The original altar was a tree stump with a wooden cross. This cross has been preserved and is now located in the Russell Troop Hall. The original entrance was an almost perfect Gothic arch, 2.7M high by 1.8M wide, fashioned from a large symmetrically twin trunk tree.



Reconstruction started in the 1930s. The beautiful stone Altar and Cross were designed by Mr Mudie, Art Master at Footscray Tech. and fabricated by J Taylor & Son. Mr James Thompson, retired stonemason from Footscray, did the construction, including the side walls and entrance pillars which were completed in 1934.

The Altar was consecrated by the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, Archbishop Head, on the 4th of September 1932.

12 - Scout Law Street Lamps

[S37°55'04.3" E145°34'43.3"]

There are ten green street lamps around the outside of the Middleton parade ground.

Each one has a Scout Law on a plate at the base.

These were donated by Tom Hartley, member and chair of the Victorian Branch Executive Committee, Victorian Branch of Scouts Australia.



13 - Middleton Flagstaff and surrounding buildings:

Switzer Lodge

[S37°55'05.2" E145°34'42.7"]

The building was opened in 1960 and known as the "Ladies Hostel". It was renamed in honour of Geoff Switzer, Gilwell Park's Warden from 1964 to 1984.

Recent renovations have increased its capacity and installed modern facilities.



deMolnar Hall

[S37°55'06.4" E145°34'41.5"]

Built to enable two training courses to be conducted at the same time.

It is named in honour of Dr. Fitz de Molnar in recognition of his service to Scouting and officially opened by The Chief Commissioner of

Australia Mr C Roy Nichols. Dr Fitz deMolnar's many Scouting and other awards are displayed in "The Lodge", located on the western side of the Gembrook – Launching Place Road.



Charles P Middleton Flagstaff and Delacombe Hall

[S37°55'04.7" E145°34'41.0"] - [S37°55'06.5" E145°34'40.5"]

The Flagstaff was named after the Chief Commissioner C. P. Middleton who supported the initial years of Gilwell Park.

Delacombe Hall and Kitchen was constructed to cater for two simultaneous training courses. Delacombe Hall was opened by his Excellency, The State Governor and Chief Scout Major-General Sir Rohan Dalcombe, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., C.B., D.S.O., S.St.J. on 17th March, 1974.



Spring Lodge

[S37°55'06.5" E145°34'40.5"]

Located along Currawong Drive running south of The Russell Troop hall is a motel style accommodation, a gift from Dr Donald F Spring for Leader training and opened in 1983 by Chief Commissioner of Australia, Dr Norman S Johnson OBE.



14 - The Russell Troop Hall

[S37°55'04.5" E145°34'40.1"]

Originally called the Group Hall (see the 1936 map of Gilwell Park) the central part was constructed by Mr E. H. C. "Tom" Russell in time for the 3rd Woodbadge course in January 1927 and was officially opened by Lord Somers, Chief Scout of Victoria. In 1931 Baden-Powell (BP) planted an Oak tree nearby. Also BP and Lord Somers (future Chief Scout) had their photos taken here – it's called "The Two Chiefs".



In 1932, during the Great Depression, The State Executive paid sustenance wages to many Rovers and unemployed Scouters who did a number of jobs at Gilwell Park, which included the lining and fitting out the Troop hall and adding its verandah.

15 - Old Water Supply

[S37°55'07.2" E145°34'38.7"]

During the early days the increasing popularity and camping highlighted the need to have a safe supply of drinking water.



This site was chosen by Dr W. B. Wishart, Hon Medical Officer, as there are permanent springs located within the property managed by the Scout Association and thereby providing water free from contamination entering Clark and Sheppard Creeks.

Hon. Harold Cohen raised an appeal and the dam was completed in 1934.

The dam's capacity was doubled, a pump installed and pipe work laid to both sides of the park in 1961 thus enabling more camp sites to be used. In 1990s Town water was connected to Gilwell Park and is now the source for all drinking water. Taps connected to Town Water are coloured Blue.

16 - The Edgar Derrick Centre (EMD Centre)

[S37°55'13.2" E145°34'36.0"]

A dormitory style accommodation with kitchen and dining facilities. Used by Cub Scouts for Pack Holidays. It is named after a great Scouter and Leader Edgar M Derrick and opened in 1977.



The area was originally known as the Lone Scout Area. A Lone Scout is a member of the Scouting movement but without a Troop or Pack, typically Scouts from remote country areas. The first Lone Scout camp (OORDIYALYAL) was held in 1930. In developing their area each Lone Scout designed and carved a picket for the fence that surrounded their area. The Lone Scout section was greatly reduced after the intervention of World War II. Likewise overtime the carved pickets disintegrated and the few remaining ones, pictured, are located in the Sycamore building and the Victorian Scout Heritage centre, Mackie Rd, Bentleigh East.



17 - Cleve Cole Hut

[S37°55'15.0" E145°34'36.9"]

Cleve Cole was appointed the first Commissioner for Lone Scouts in 1927. Cleve Cole's devotion to the Lone Scouts section before his tragic death in a blizzard on Mt Bogong in 1937 was perpetuated in the camp's main building which was named in his honour.



In recent times radio aerials were erected nearby and used on radio based camps and JOTA (Jamboree On The Air). These have now been relocated to a tower behind “The Storm Hut” on the Western side of Gilwell Park.

Use “Gilwell Park’s Scouting History Walk, Western Side” guide to discover more of Scouting’s rich history and traditions.

Read “The Story Of Gilwell In Victoria” to discover more on the people who have contributed greatly to the making of Gilwell Park, a great place to come whilst looking after its environment.

The map below gives a view of Gilwell Park in 1936.

