


































The World Chief Guide

Olave Baden-Powell

Random

-  Once settled at Grey Rigg Olave was able to find some 'meaningful' work to balance out her existence of tennis, hunting, and parties, which bored her intensely, by helping to look after disabled children at a local hospital.
-  Olave loved to play squash against her father, and they had their own squash court.
-  At 21 Olave became secretly engaged for one week to her cousin Noel Soames.
-  Olave's sister Auriole was the great beauty of the family, and while Auriole was 'doing the season' in London, Olave was wading through the fields with her dog, which she much preferred.
-  One of Olave's early dreams was to be a concert violinist.
-  Olave's father finally settled the family when Olave was 19 in 1908, at Grey Rigg, overlooking Poole Harbour and Brownsea Island.
-  Olave considered herself the "runt of the litter", being smaller than both her eldest brother Arthur, and her sister Auriole.
-  Olave's first overseas trip was to the Riviera when she was 12.
-  Just before she turned 21, Olave auditioned for and was accepted into a Ladies' Orchestra, the first time she'd really done anything independent of her family.
-  Olave loved all the moving around the family did when she was a girl. Her mother described her: "Olave is equal to three charwomen in work, and to the whole char race in wits..
-  Olave was named by her father. He loved Norse legend and had decided the next child born to the family would be a boy called Olaf. Instead the next child was a girl. And he called her Olave.
-  Olave never went to school, never sat a single exam, and mostly learned outside. She and her sister Auriole were educated by a series of nannies and governesses. Her parents described this as being "not made to learn, but made to wish to learn.
-  Olave first became a guide when she was appointed County Commissioner for Sussex in 1916.
-  Olave received three marriage proposals before she met BP.
-  Olave wanted to have her hair cut short. This was well before short hair was fashionable. BP told her she was not to do so until every county in England was organised. (Commissioners etc in place) "That sounds very like 'never', doesn't it". she told a friend.

-  During her first 23 years, Olave (and her family) lived in 17 different homes.
-  Once settled at Grey Rigg Olave was able to find some 'meaningful' work to balance out her existence of tennis, hunting, and parties, which bored her intensely, by helping to look after disabled children at a local hospital.
-  Olave as a girl was thin, with hair short like a boy's, and tanned because of her outdoor life. Most un-Victorian-lady like!
-  Olave's mother Katherine was a renowned beauty, always very conscious of looking her best, who wouldn't even go to speak to the gardeners without wearing gloves and a picture hat.
-  Olave had never cooked anything in her life before she got married, as everything was done by the nine servants employed by the family.
-  Olave's sister Auriole married at age 25, to Robert Davidson, a wealthy Ceylonese planter of Scottish origin.
-  Olave's father loathed English winters, and spent every northern winter in a warm southern climate - Italy, Egypt, Greece, and once, the West Indies during which trip Olave met BP.
-  Olave never learned to iron successfully. Her one attempt at ironing a shirt resulted in a brown mess stuck to the iron - BP was the ironer in the family!
-  Olave wore a buttonhole badge of Lt-Gen Baden Powell, following the relief of Mafeking in 1900. She was 11 years old.
-  Olave and BP were married quietly and simply on October 30 1912, to escape massive media speculation, with only their closest family present.
-  Olave's inseparable "companion" as a child was a grey velvet elephant called Tweets, and she had him her whole life.
-  Olave's father owned a brewery, and was able to employ managers so he never had to work. This allowed him to roam the country with his family, looking for his "Earthly Paradise", which he eventually found when Olave was 19.
-  Auriole and Olave as girls took care of the family's poultry, everything from buying the feed to hatching the chicks - and billed their mother for the eggs each week!
-  When the World Chief Guide talked of her work, all details came quickly to mind. Seldom in her busy day did she falter for a name, or date, or event. "I see a face and - click, I remember the person and all connected with the meeting," she said. "Yet I cannot remember a line of poetry, a passage of literature. In fact I don't know the words of the Guide Song!"
-  "Olave was so besotted with B-P she even tried to write the like him
-  "Mum never touched a bit of make-up, never heard of mascara (or thought it was a pill) in her life".

Why the robin?

BP usually drew a small robin on his letters to Olave before their marriage. She referred to him as Robin in her letters at the time.