



The World Chief Guide

Olave Baden-Powell

Timeline

- 1889 22 February
Olave St Clair Soames is born in Stubbing Court, Chesterfield, England
At the time of her birth, her mother was unsure if either of them would survive
Also on this day, Robert Baden Powell celebrated his 32nd birthday
- 1907 Robert Baden Powell runs the first Boy Scout Camp at Brownsea, England
- 1910- The Girl Guides Association of the United Kingdom was formed for those "Girl Scouts" who had presented themselves at the 1909 rally of Boy Scouts in Crystal Palace, London. BP Asked his sister, Agnes, to write a book for them, along the lines of Scouting for Boys. She became the Association's first President
1912 The first Girl Guide groups start in various parts of Australia
- 1912 Olave meets Robert Baden-Powell during a cruise on the Arcadian to the West Indies. He was Age 23 "The only interesting person on board!"
September 20
Olave and BP become engaged
October 30
Olave and BP are married
Girl Scouting begins in the USA, by Juliette Gordon-Lowe
- 1913 January 14-March 1 Holiday Cruise with BP - Algiers, Sahara, Carthage, Tunis, Valetta (Malta)
Age 24 April
Move into their first home, Ewhurst Place, Sussex
June
Olave becomes a warranted Scoutmaster in Sussex
October
Peter, their first child is born
BP's mother dies
- 1914 Olave learns to drive, acts as BP's chauffeur - he didn't like driving
Olave was a warranted Scout leader. It was with 1st Ewhurst Scout Troop, the troop she and BP started at their home for their staff
- 1915 Heather, elder daughter, born (her name chosen by the Guides)
September
Olave arrives in France as a Scout recruit to work with YMCA in 'respite huts' for troops. Children cared for by Olave's mother
- 1916 Olave is enrolled as a Guide
Appointed County Commissioner for Sussex
First Commissioners' Conference, Matlock
- 1917 Olave sets up an International Committee and an Overseas Council
April - Betty born
Move to Horley after sale of Ewhurst Place after owner killed in the war
- 1918 Olave becomes Chief Guide of England
Olave receives the Silver Fish Award - made especially in gold just for Olave
Pax Hill purchased with a gift from Olave's father
- 1919 Olave forms the International Council - the forerunner of WAGGGS
Olave writes to women in Brazil, asking them to consider starting Girl Guides
- 1920 First World Conference, Oxford
- 1922 World Conference, Cambridge

- 1923 Foxlease opened - first Guiders' training
- 1924 The first World Camp at Foxlease, England. Forty countries represented
Age 35
- 1926 Australian states form the Federal Council of Girl Guides Associations in Australia
Thinking Day originates at the 4th World Conference in New York
World Conference, Camp Edith Macy, USA
Three month tour of USA, visiting Girl Scouts
Six months in South Africa
- 1928 World Conference, Parad, Hungary - where the World Association of Girl Guides & Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) is established, with offices in London
Lady BP visits Australia
- 1929 August - Liverpool Jamboree
Age 40 Pax Hill burgled, many souvenirs stolen
Another cruise to the West Indies, on the Alcantara
Visit to the USA
- 1930 January - Visits West Indies
Olave wrote the follow of an adventure while in Bermuda (1930)
I had the luck to be allowed to walk down on the bottom of the sea. This sounds rather odd, but actually I went down in a diving helmet, which was one of the most exciting things I have ever done.
This happened at the Aquarium, which is a world-famous one, on the edge of Harington Sound. I went in my bathing dress and dived into the water and then stood at the edge of the bank whilst some men put the helmet over my head. It rested on my shoulders, and then they screwed in the window in front of my face, and attached. the air-pipes and made all secure and safe for me. Then I just walked away, and down into the deeper water, breathing ordinarily, and the air that I had breathed and finished with went out at the top of the helmet through one tube, and other fresh air was being pumped in through another tube, so that I had a constant supply of nice clean oxygen to keep me going! It was simply fascinating. I walked on and on, over the rough surface of pebbles and rocks and coral ridges, my feet swishing through sea-weed, and with fishes darting hither and thither all round me.
One came flipping up and looked in at my face through my window, and then darted away between my fingers as I put up my hand to try to catch him.
There was a wonderful greenish-bluish light as one walked down at that depth, thick and opaque, and I could see the rubber air-tube which was attached to the helmet disappearing away into nothingness, which made one feel miles away from anywhere, and absolutely lost! I loved it, and though to a certain extent it was rather eerie walking about at the bottom of the sea, I felt that I wanted to stay and go on and on, and I was quite sorry to have to turn round and follow my pipe back to the surface.
So I have a lot to thank Bermuda for. *From "Travelogues" by Olave Baden-Powell*
July 16 - World Conference at Foxlease
Olave is elected World Chief Guide
Presented with award Grand Dame of the British Empire by King George V
Unveils two railway engines called "The Boy Scout" and "The Girl Guide"
- 1931 Our Chalet gifted by Mrs Storrow
Family economies introduced - staff reduced to five maids, two gardeners
Olave's mother moves in. Shortly thereafter has a stroke and requires extensive care
January-June: Visits Australia, New Zealand and South Africa
- 1932 Olave's mother dies. Olave is left out of the will
21st celebrations of Guiding - 5000 guides renew their promise at St Paul's Cathedral
Olave receives GBE in Queen's Birthday Honours List
Visits to Paris, Switzerland for Our Chalet opening, 7th World Guide Conference in Kattawice, Poland August - Thinking Day Fund started
- 1933 Visit to Malta
Heather makes her 'debut'
Guide/Scout Cruises begin on White Star Lines' Calgaric with 650 Guides and Scouts

- 1934 Betty has emergency appendectomy
 BP has prostate removal surgery, emergency blood transfusions
 Peter goes to South Africa to join the British South African Police
 Olave attends 8th World Conference at Our Chalet, August
 Chiefs cruise on the Adriatic to Gibraltar, France, Malta, Algiers, Lisbon
 Visit to Australia, stopping in: Egypt, greeted by 1600 Guides, Scouts, Cubs, Brownies.
 Netherlands East Indies (Batavia, Samarang, Sourabaya)
- 1935 BP's ill health continues. Visit Kenya to recover
- 1936 Betty marries Gervas Clay
 World Conference, Rattvik, Sweden
- 1937 Visit to India (January to April) for Jamboree and country wide tour
 5th World Jamboree, Holland
 Olave attended the Jamboree in Hungary
 Gillian born to Betty in Rhodesia
 Silver wedding anniversary celebrations
- 1938 Visit to Kenya - BP ill again
 Olave makes first TV appearance
 Cruise to Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Belgium
 Visit to South Africa
 World Conference, Ireland
 Paxtu' completed, BPs move to Kenya in October. They acquire a hyrax as a house pet
- 1939 Olave becomes Colony Commissioner of Kenya
 Age 50 Olave decides to learn Swahili at the mission at Nyeri
 Betty's second baby born
 BP ill again
 Our Ark opened in London
 World Camp. Godollo, Hungary, where the World Flag was flown for the first time
 Outbreak of WW2
- 1940 Family reunion in Kenya. Heather was in the ATS so missed the reunion
 BP ill again
 World Conference in France - not held because of WW2
- 1941 8 January. BP Dies at Paxtu, Kenya. Olave could not attend, spent the day of the funeral weeping and walking "in agonised grief" Olave was 51
 Thousands of letters from all over the world are sent to Kenya
 Olave goes on a 3 month tour of Africa in a truck with niece Christian
- 1942 Depression set in on return to Nyeri
 Tours South Africa
 Moves back to UK - very frightening cruise back through u-boat attacks
 Guiding starts to raise funds for relief teams to assist in liberated areas of Europe. (Guide International Service) ([GIS](#))
 No home- Pax Hill was occupied by Canadian troops. She was awarded a 'grace and favour' apartment in Hampton Court
 Birth of Heather's son Michael
- 1943 Although rationing bites hard, Olave entertains many ex-Scout servicemen from all over the world
 Cycling became part of her life again to overcome crowded, limited, and slow transport
 Baden Powell Memorial fund appeal launched - Princess Margaret was the star in first fund-raising concert
- 1944 First relief teams are sent to assist in liberated areas of Europe (Guide International Service)
 Age 55 Continual touring of UK to "keep the spirits high and the ideals bright"
 A V2 Rocket brings down ceiling of Olave's apartment in summer - she was touring the Midlands at the time
 Olave starts to learn French so she can go into Europe
 Lays wreaths at war memorials in towns all over France, Switzerland, Italy, Luxembourg, Belgium

- 1945 Agnes Baden Powell died
 Olave wishes 'God-speed' to a GIS team off to The Netherlands
 Olave starts to travel to the war-torn countries of Europe, to revive Guiding and Scouting
 From Olave's diary (as noted in welcome booklet, visit to Australia 1958)
 St. George's Day., Attended Scout and Guide celebrations of freedom in Paris. Toured through Normandy with General Lafont, Chief Scout of France. Continued through Alsace and Lorraine, and on VE Day crossed into Switzerland, Italy, Luxembourg, Belgium, England, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Switzerland.
- 1946 Olave begins world tour to raise funds to assist Guiding and Scouting to resume in Europe
 September - Olave visits Slovakia
 World Conference, Evian, France
 World Badge adopted
 From Olave's diary (as noted in welcome booklet, visit to Australia 1958)
 West Indies, British Guiana, Cuba, Mexico, the United States, Canada and Newfoundland.
 Travelled 3720 miles by sea, 6355 miles by train, 16,610 miles by air, and 3565 miles by road.
 Made 231 speeches to audiences varying in number (from 30 to 20,000, gave 62 press interviews or radio talks. Attended World Conference at Evian, France. Visited Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, and Holland.
- 1947 World tour - 12 months!
 Visits to Australia
- 1948 All Africa Conference, Johannesburg 1948
 World Conference, Cooperstown, USA
 Olave threw the baseball at the World Series
- 1949 Returns to Paxtu for solitary Christmas
 Age 60 Peter and family return to England to live
 Visits to Malta, Italy, Greece and France
 From Olave's diary (as noted in welcome booklet, visit to Australia 1958)
 Visited Holland, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Belgium, France and Denmark and many parts of the British Isles; in a five months' tour of Africa travelled over 23,000 miles by air and visited 20 territories.
- 1950 World Song adopted at World conference in England
 The Mayor of Poole, UK, presenting Olave the Freedom of The City in recognition of her service in the cause of youth
- 1952 World Tour
 Lecture tour of USA and Canada
 Hilda Baden Powell moves in with Olave, very frail following a fall
 World Conference, Dombas, Norway
- 1953 Coronation Year - Olave hosts 128 Guiding and Scouting guests from all over the world
 Appears in a TV special on Hampton Court
 Lecture tour of USA - 42,000 miles in six months, 57 cities, 25 states, 158 talks!
- 1954 Olave attends the World Conference in The Hague
 World Brownie Badge adopted
- 1955 Hilda dies
 Another tour of the USA - eight months, Canada (Niagara Falls Jamboree) 86 talks, USA 186 talks, Mexico
- 1956 Tour of Africa - interrupted by Egypt/Israeli war
- 1957 50th Anniversary of Brownsea Camp - worldwide celebrations
 Olave presides at opening of Our Cabana, the Third World Centre
 Olave visits Ghana, Sri Lanka, Australia
 While staying with friends in Australia, Olave, who says "I am never ill", found herself in hospital. She suffered with gall stones. But, she was a hardy woman and attended the planned Rally 18 days later
- 1958 Olave visits Australia, Malaya, Hong Kong, Philippines, Uruguay
 Dedication of 'Our Cabana', Cuernavaca, Mexico

- 1959 Olave tours South America
Age 70 Receives 'Freedom' of the Cities of Panama and Reno!
Opens Our Cabana
In a celebration on 17 October 1959 the Foundation Stone for Baden-Powell House was laid by the World Chief Guide Olave, Lady Baden-Powell
- 1960 Olave visits Nigeria, Portugal, Germany, Gibraltar, Denmark, Greece, Finland, Switzerland, Lebanon and Pakistan
Golden Jubilee of Guiding
- 1961 BP House in Kensington opens
Olave continues to host many houseguests
Olave visits India, East Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon, Italy, Isle of Wight and United States of America
During Canada tour - Olave has a heart attack while on Prince Edward Island
- 1962 Returns to England, fully recovered
Olave's brother Arthur dies
Olave's son Peter dies
Olave visits Japan, India, Hong Kong, other parts of Asia
Appears on a stamp issued in Haiti, to honour the 22nd Anniversary of Scouting in Haiti
- 1963 Our Ark moves to larger premises and is renamed Olave House
- 1964 Olave visits: Israel, Trinidad & Tobago and Surinam
- 1965 Olave visits Kenya
- 1966 Sangam, our fourth World Centre, opens in Pune, India
Olave visits Philippines, to attend the Closing Ceremonies of the GSP's 25th anniversary held at the Luneta Grandstand
- 1967 Olave tours Australia
Olave had received £300.00 from the Australian 'Ice-Cream for the Chief' fund. It had been given to her to do something for herself. Olave was such an unselfish woman. She had many thoughts on treats for herself but chose to spend the money on books. She had been in South Africa and saw the lack of books and illiteracy so when arriving in Mexico, she rushed from shop to shop and delighted in buying £300.00 worth of books. Her words - "Blew the \$300.00 - it was the greatest fun". These became to be known as the 'ice-cream books'
- 1969 Attends 'Jubilations', Guiding's Diamond Jubilee celebrations at Westminster Abbey on Thinking
Age 80 Day
Jubilee celebrations in Finland, Belgium, Kenya, South Africa, USA, Denmark
An ice-cream for the Chief in Brisbane, May
- 1970 Diagnosed with diabetes, ordered to stop travelling!
- 1971 September Unveiled David Wynne's sculpture of BP at Gilwell's International Centre
- 1972 The Olave Baden-Powell Rose is introduced (Germany)
- 1973 Her Autobiography, Window on my Heart, appears
World Food and Agriculture organisation awards Olave the Ceres Medal
- 1975 Thinking Day Symbol introduced
- 1977 19 June Death of Olave Baden-Powell at Birtley House, aged 88
9 August Olave's ashes placed beside BP's at Paxtu in Kenya
Donations made in Olave's name were assigned to the building of the Olave Centre, in London
- 1991 Pax Lodge in the Olave Centre opens, 15 March