



*The World Chief Guide*

*Lady Baden-Powell*

*My Granny*

It was a night in October and the event was Moogerah, Region's annual dinner. Members of the Region were meeting friends and chatting when the guest speaker and his wife arrived. They were carrying a small trunk between them and, in greeting, said "No, it isn't bullion!"

Nigel Baden Clay and his wife, Elaine, 12 months resident in Australia - nine in Melbourne and three in Toowoomba "where we want to live for the rest of our lives" - are a delightful, friendly couple. Nigel, who is in the insurance industry, came along to tell us about "My Granny" who was Lady Baden-Powell.

The son of Betty and Jervis Clay, Nigel was born in Africa and brought up there in "our wonderful world brotherhood and sisterhood of Scouting and Guiding". He lived in Zambia (Northern Rhodesia) until 1972 when he and Elaine moved south across the Zambesi River to Zimbabwe (Rhodesia).

On arrival in Perth the Clays were touched by the welcome given to them by a lady who has 60 years in Guiding, and her kindness to them in the 10 days they were in the city. They have received the same sort of welcome right around Australia.

In touching on four particular memories of "Granny", Nigel spoke of her wonderful enthusiasm, of how she took him and his brother for a walk miles across a Swiss mountain top to see and feel snow for the first time and when, the boys with her, she went incognito to Our Chalet (with nary a Guide badge on her). It took ages for anyone to recognise her and he was amused by the reaction of the staff when they eventually realised who their visitor was.

Whenever she could, Lady Baden-Powell went to Kenya - it was a sort of pilgrimage. In 1968 on one such visit, Nigel and younger brother Robin, flew up to Kenya to be with her and travelled all over that country with "Granny", a most vivid memory of that time being their stay at Nyeri.

Referring to his marriage to Elaine, Nigel told us about an exhausting tour of Finland by "Granny". On her last day there, when on her way to speak to 1,000 people gathered in a hall, she slipped in a passageway and hit a wall face first. Undaunted, she got up and without further ado went and spoke to the assembly. From there she flew to England and on the following day went to Bournemouth for the wedding. She wore a big hat and if one peered under the brim "two enormous shiners" could be seen! The next day she left England on yet another overseas visit.

Her last world tour was to South Africa in 1970 where Nigel and Elaine joined her in Johannesburg. It was there, 27 years previously Betty had told her mother that she was to have a baby (Nigel), that they gave her the news that they were expecting their first-born. While in England awaiting the birth Elaine went to spend a short time with "Granny", the intention being to look after her as her servant was ill.

However Elaine's role became reversed and she found she could not match Lady B.-P.'s energy.

Along with Lady Baden-Powell's grace and favour residence at Hampton Court Palace came an annexe with 13 rooms. Each room was named after a country and if someone was staying at "Hampers" (her name) she was told "You will be sleeping in Africa (or some other country) my dear". She had a garden plot at Hampers and would talk about "going to stand on my head in the garden" - this being her way of referring to her stooping method of weeding the plot in which among other things she grew rhubarb, roses and lilies.

She replied to all who wrote to her and answered the 2,000 Christmas cards she received. Nigel said she was a most remarkable person and a real Granny. In conclusion he read us a sentence from a writing by his mother, about Lady B.-P.: "She was such a marvellous Mum that as children we never noticed that she. was the World Chief Guide." The small trunk? To us it did contain bullion and everyone enjoyed looking at the personal mementoes - photographs, newspaper clippings, books — that were in it. What a treat we had that night and our memories of Olave, Lady Baden-Powell, have been highlighted by having heard about "My Granny".

*Queensland Leader*