

News

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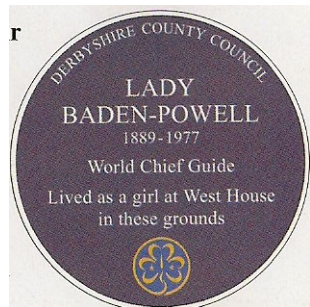
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COUNCIL HONOURS WORLD CHIEF GUIDE



The Guiding movement's leading light is to be immortalised in her home county - thanks to thousands of votes being cast.

Lady Olave Baden-Powell polled more votes than any other nominee in Derbyshire County Council's blue plaque scheme, launched to commemorate the county's biggest names and places.

And now a plaque is being put up in her honour on the site of her former childhood home in Chesterfield.

The plaque will be unveiled jointly by Derbyshire County Council leader and cabinet member for

culture Councillor Andrew Lewer and local Brownie Hallie Baron, aged nine, of the 1st Holme Hall Brownies, Chesterfield.

They will be joined by an honoured guest - Lord and Lady Baden-Powell's grandson Robin Clay.

Lady Baden-Powell's plaque will be unveiled in Shentall Memorial Gardens, Rose Hill, on Tuesday, February 22, at 2.30pm in front of an audience of children and adults from Girlguiding Derbyshire. The public is welcome to attend.

Shentall Memorial Gardens is where Lady Baden-Powell's former home West House once stood.

Lord Baden-Powell's Jam Roll Rolls Royce - given to him as a gift by the Scouting Movement and now restored - will also be on display outside Chesterfield Town Hall during the unveiling ceremony. The car was given to him in 1929 and is named after the Scout World Jamboree.

Lady Baden-Powell's plaque will be the second Derbyshire County Council blue plaque unveiled. The first was to Sir Joseph Paxton, the former Chatsworth gardener, last December.

Councillor Andrew Lewer said he was proud to see Lady Baden-Powell honoured in her home county.

"She was a pioneer in her time and ensured the Guiding movement is what it is today, with millions of members worldwide.

"She grew up in Derbyshire and I am pleased to be able to honour her in the town where she spent much of her childhood."

The county council's blue plaque scheme celebrates Derbyshire's cultural and historical heritage. The authority received lots of nominations and after short-listing and a public vote the first six to be honoured were determined.

The remaining four are: Richard Arkwright junior, Jedidiah Buxton, Arthur Lowe and George Stephenson.

The date for the latest ceremony - February 22 - is significant to the guiding movement for two reasons.

As well as being the Girl Guides and Girl Scouts World Thinking Day it is also the birthdays of Lady and Lord Baden-Powell.

Lord Baden-Powell founded the Scouts in 1907 and the Guides in 1910.

Lady Baden-Powell, who became Chief Guide for Britain in 1918, was nominated for a blue plaque for her services to Guiding by local Brownie leader Louise Collins, of New Whittington.

She said: "This is a great honour, not only for Girlguiding Derbyshire, but also for the Guiding movement across the world.

"Guiding is about being part of a community, making new friends both at home and around the world and giving girls the opportunity to try new activities, develop their skills and their confidence. Lady Baden-Powell embodied these values and as there are more than 9,000 members in Derbyshire, for her to be honoured in this way is brilliant for us."

Photo Opportunity: Photographers and reporters are invited to attend the unveiling ceremony which takes place on Tuesday, February 22, at 2.30pm, in Shentall Memorial Gardens, Rose Hill, S40 1LP, opposite the Town Hall, Chesterfield.

Note to News Editors: Derbyshire County Council launched its Blue Plaque scheme last year. Lady Baden-Powell received more than 18,000 votes.

Background to Lady Olave St Clair Baden-Powell

Olave was born on Feb 22, 1889, at Stubbing Court near Chesterfield. Olave was the third and youngest daughter of Brampton Brewery owner Harold Soames. The family later went on to live at West House (now the site of Shentall Memorial Gardens) then at Renishaw Hall near Eckington. Olave was eight years old when the family left Derbyshire, moving around the country, but it was Derbyshire that was Olave's birthplace and where she spent her early formative years.

Olave was a tomboy, who relished the outdoors much to her mother's disapproval; she excelled

at sports including tennis, swimming, football, skating and canoeing, and played the violin very well. As a child, Olave was also very much an animal lover and visitors in her early years commented on the St Bernard and Collie who followed her wherever she went. Her father passed on his horticultural knowledge and love of gardening and her mother needlework, knitting and crochet skills.

In January 1912, Olave met Boer War hero and founder of the Scouts, Robert Baden-Powell on an ocean liner on the way to New York to start one of his Scouting World Tours. She was 23, he 55, and they shared the same birthday. They became engaged in September of the same year, causing a media sensation and to avoid press intrusion, they married in secret on 30 October 1912. The exuberant tomboy's boundless energy led to an unflagging support of her husband and helped Scouting and Guiding to grow even faster.

Olave initially began her Guiding career in Sussex where she was so dedicated to organising the movement that they elected Olave as Chief Commissioner for England. In the next 18 months she recruited 2,840 Guide Commissioners, and organised every county in England. By 1924 Olave had spread the Guiding movement around the world and the first World Conference was held at Foxlease in the New Forest. By 1928, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts had been set up in response to demand, a draft constitution was agreed and the beginnings of a truly worldwide association transpired. Olave herself was given the honour of becoming World Chief Guide after being elected in 1930.

In 1939, Olave went with her husband, whose health was failing, to their home Paxtu in Kenya. There they lived the open-air life they both loved, and there two years later Robert Baden-Powell died. Olave was overcome with grief but found that by throwing herself into caring for Guides and Scouts, her grief became more manageable.

Throughout World War II, she toured the United Kingdom and supported the setting up of the Guides International Service, which initially raised funds for relief teams to be set up. The Guides raised £50,000 during the Second World War, enabling the purchase of two aeroplanes and 20 ambulances. The Guide International Service went on to help after the war, sending out older Guides and leaders to many war-ravaged parts of Europe to help with the rehabilitation. These teams were among the first to enter some of the concentration camps and assisted with care and medical attention of the captives. As soon as she could after D-Day, Olave toured throughout Europe as the war ended to help revive Guiding and Scouting. Olave was an indefatigable traveller, visiting 111 countries in her lifetime. She was finally banned from travelling in 1970 at the age of 80 after being diagnosed with diabetes.

Olave died on the 25 June 1977 at Birtley House, Bramley in Surrey. Her ashes were taken to

Kenya to be placed next to her husband's. Scouts and Guides mark February 22 as Thinking Day or Founders Day, the joint birthdays of Robert and Olave Baden-Powell, to remember and celebrate the work of the Chief Scout and Chief Guide of the World.

Her role in Guiding changed with age, but she constantly kept its growth foremost in her life. It is impossible to assess the great qualities of leadership, judgement and energy, which Lady Baden Powell gave to Guiding and Scouting. She was a truly inspirational woman, whose legacy continues today through a worldwide movement of 10million girls and women in 145 countries. 550,000 members nationally and over 9,000 members in Derbyshire. Over the last 100 years Guiding has significantly influenced the shape of society, and will continue to do so into the future.

Further Notes: As the largest youth organisation for girls and young women in the UK, Girlguiding UK provides opportunities for girls and adults of all backgrounds and experience to gain new skills, make new friends and most importantly have fun. For more details of how to take part call 0800 1 69 59 01 or visit www.girlguiding.org.uk/joinus
Locally, call 01773 880875 or see website www.girlguidingderbyshire.org

For media enquiries please contact Alison Jesney on 01629 538471.