

THE
HACKFORD HOUSE TROOP
AT THE
KING'S RALLY

BY
PATROL LEADER
DONALD KENDALL-CHAPMAN

All spelling mistakes are the
printer's errors not the Author
DKC

18 page booklet
17x12 cm (approx)

July 1911

Creased & stained

Donald was 16 when he wrote this.

The language & choice of vocabulary are very interesting
for a boy that age.

Notable is the hospitality & entertainment
they received at Beech Hill, Samuel Bircham's Surrey home.

Janet Archer Reepham Archive Volunteer

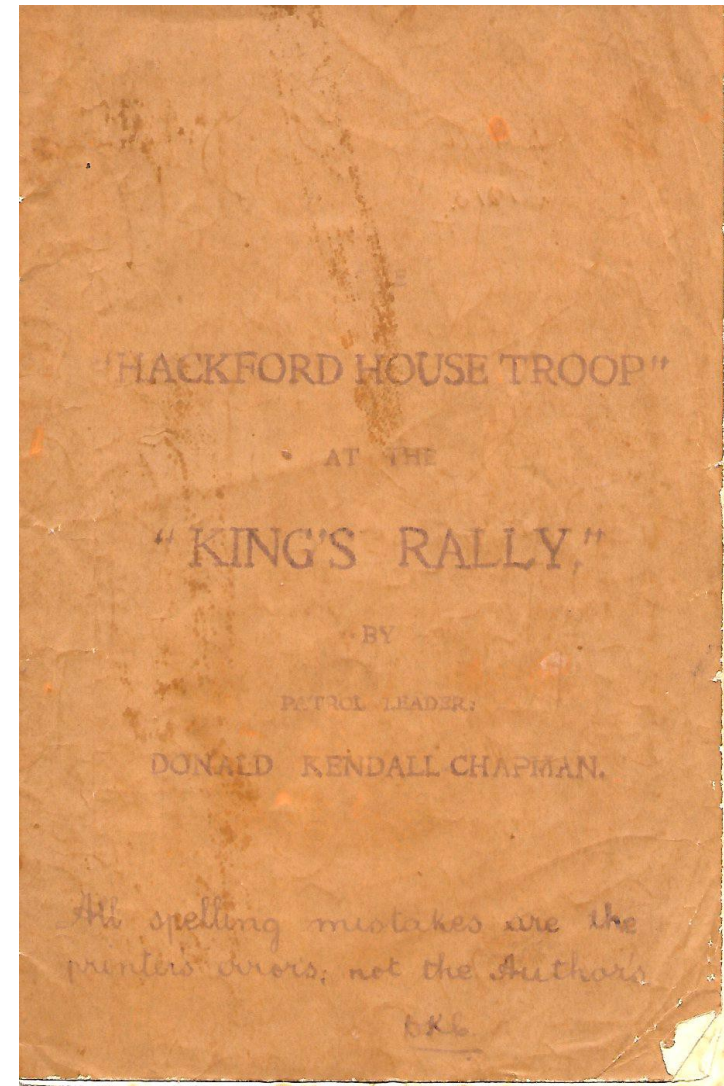


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NORWICH:

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PREFACE.

In submitting this before the public, I should like to say that we, as a troop, were only formed at the end of November in 1910. It then comprised two Patrols (Peewits and Wood Pigeons) all being tenderfoots: and now (July, 1911) there are three Patrols (Eagles being the other) all of whom are Second-Class Scouts, which means that they were entitled to attend the Rally. It is a matter of history how His Gracious Majesty consented to review all Second-Class Baden-Powell Boy Scouts at Windsor, and that a special invitation was extended to Norfolk "B-P" Scouts, which was eagerly accepted. It is true that our chances of attending appeared rather remote at one time, but thanks to our Scoutmaster, Mr. Bircham, all obstacles were overcome. After many rehearsals we were in trim for the greatest event of our lives.

CHAPTER I.

OUR DEPARTURE.

The morning of the 3rd of July, 1911, broke a very dull and cheerless one, and not at all inviting. The Troop assembled early at headquarters, and there awaited final instructions. A smart and heavy shower greeted us on our march to the station, but our spirits were not damped if our capes *were!* It continued all the way up to the station where it terminated as suddenly as it commenced, and the sun began to struggle through the hazy skies. Capes had been rolled up and everything had been made spick and span long before the train had been signalled. We began our ever memorable journey in the presence of a large following of well-wishers. Nothing of note happened on the way to Wroxham, where we boarded a corridor, and incidentally ran up against a reporter who made our journey most interesting and entertaining as he explained everything of note, especially the G.E.R. Company's works at Stratford. Liverpool Street was reached at 11.30, where we did justice to some dinner in the Hotel on the Station. Then we did some sight-seeing over London, of which more hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

LONDON: ST. PAULS', ETC.

Leaving the hotel, we marched through the many crowded streets and passed the Bank, Mansion House, and halted by the Royal Exchange. Here we could see the remnants of the the splendid Coronation decorations. Marching onwards—it was deemed safer to keep our ranks—we made for St. Pauls' Cathedral, where we went in the churchyard to rest. After a while we entered that sacred edifice and sat under the big dome. The more adventurous of us explored the Crypt, and others had a look round the various tombs of Britain's heroes, Lord Nelson's claiming our chief attention. Not content with that, many of us decided to unravel the mysteries of the Whispering Gallery. Oh! what an experience! Round and round, ever going and yet apparently with no definite destination. Sometimes there was a small level piece which broke the monotony, but the stair climbing process was soon in evidence again. However, we did reach our goal, and tested the mysterious Whispering Gallery. The source from which it derives its name is obvious, so will continue. Leaving this circle, we made our way to the Stone Gallery, where we were well rewarded for all our trouble by having a fine panoramic view of the whole city, which was bathed in the golden sunlight, making the whole scene a very picturesque one. Our eyes feasted upon the brilliant spectacle so that we entirely forgot that the time was growing short until Big Ben's deep rich boom floated to our ears, reminding us that we had other interesting places to visit. We were thankful when we were under

the big dome again. Forming up, we were soon on the way to Westminster Abbey, *via* the famous Thames Embankment. We rested at judicious intervals here, the longest period being under the Cleopatra's Needle, which called for special investigation. Forward into the Embankment Gardens we enjoyed yet another rest, which was employed by replenishing our water bottles from a fountain. A little later we were in Parliament Street, where the Coronation stands were still remaining. It was amusing to see Pitt and Cobden, as well as many other prominent Statesmen in their 'pulpits,' as they were surrounded by the stands.

As boy scouts (in uniform) we were admitted free into the Abbey. Pressing slowly forward to the dais, on which stood the thrones in all their regal splendour, we were deeply struck by the solemnity of it all. Not a few of us wondered what their Majesties' thoughts must have been at the actual Coronation ceremony, when we were filled with holy adoration with nothing but the empty thrones and the vacant seats of the nobility before us! Passing the Coronation chair I touched it, and under it I observed the Stone of Scone. What an old chair, and how worm eaten it looked!—what countless historical events it recalled!! Continuing, we saw the thrones occupied by the Princes of Royal blood, and on passing H.R.H. Prince Edward's, I could not refrain from touching it. Thus I had the unique distinction of having touched two of the most prominent objects of the whole ceremony at the crowning of H.M. King George V. Passing through the annexe, we formed up and marched to the Houses of Parliament, where we failed

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to gain admittance, owing to there being a session. As time was getting away, we deemed it prudent to get to Waterloo Station, where we all first experienced travelling by the London and South Western Railway. It cannot be said that we were favourably impressed by the accommodation afforded by the third class compartments; and all loyally declared the Great Eastern to be the much more comfortable. While waiting for the train to start we were able to witness the unloading of several nuggets of silver. Their destination was undoubtedly the Bank or Mint. Some of us were amused at travelling on the housetops, but there was nothing of interest to me until we neared Brooklands. We were doomed to disappointment in that we saw no aeroplaning then; but proceedings were enlivened by a hearty discussion on aeroplaning matters! With full steam ahead, and doing about sixty miles an hour we soon found ourselves at Woking, where we changed for Worplesdon. Arriving here, the local troop (1st Beech Hill) received us, and on our march to Beech Hill, our Scoutmaster's Surrey residence, they kindly relieved us of our capes, and other heavy accoutrements. At Beech Hill we were welcomed by Mrs. Bircham—really the founder of this troop. After that, we made havoc with the excellent tea provided, having eaten practically nothing since noon. Tea over, we wandered *ad. lib.* round the well laid out gardens. I went to Woking with a Beech Hill Patrol Leader, with whom I had been corresponding. While there, we had a truly magnificent view of a biplane in full flight. From that it appeared easy enough to do: I suppose it is when you know how! Gracefully soaring over a chestnut tree it disappeared

from view, though the purring of the engines were still audible. Returning to Beech Hill, we found two scouts engaged in blindfold boxing, and a lively exhibition was created. We were summoned to the scene of our tea party, where, to our eminent satisfaction we found that our kind hostess had procured a conjuror for our amusement. After several tricks, he gave us a display of ventriloquism, in which he introduced a very ignorant boy scout. I am sure that even tenderfoots would be ashamed of him! After that, songs were the order of the evening, the visiting troop being most in evidence. Then we retired for the night. However, our first night under canvas must, on its merits, have a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER III.

OUR FIRST NIGHT UNDER CANVAS.

“Our first night in camp.” What memories it recalls! Never shall I forget it, and so said all. It was half-past eight when we went into the roomy tent to sleep, and “Lights out” was sounded at nine, but sleep was wholly at a discount—row, music (?) and singing were rampant. It was in vain that the leaders tried to quell the pandemonium. As soon as it had been extinguished in one quarter, behold, it was very much alive in another! and so throughout the whole livelong night. Sometimes there would be a lull in the storm—the lull that gives birth to increased strength to the raging atmosphere. “Rule, Britannia, Britannia rules the waves; Britons ne—Oh!” and a tribute to boot-makers in the shape of a slipper made its acquaintance

with the songster, who promptly capitulated. How we wished for morning light to end that night of torture. Shame to say that one was homesick, and he turned the water taps on and wailed for his ma! The chorus was vigorously taken up, until another scout of great ingenuity introduced nose-bleeding, which became quite contagious. Occasionally, some adventurous lad would borrow the next one's blanket which had the desired effect of producing more melody. This, added to the pandemonium already raging must have put Bedlam in a very dark background! And the ever sweet music of stray cats intermingled with the sounds from within the tent. At one, the camp bore a marked resemblance to being asleep, but at three, the same discordant noises were rampant, and it was with a feeling of relief that we arose, washed, tidied the camp up, and greeted the rising of the sun.

CHAPTER IV

THE MEMORABLE RALLY AT WINDSOR.

One or two of us felt a bit dicky after the last night's performances, but, taken on the whole, we were little the worse. We ate a hearty breakfast at 6 o'clock, and then marched to Worplesdon Station, en route for Windsor. Nothing of note befel us on our journey and we were mostly inclined to take things easy. The train was completely in the occupation of Boy Scouts, no one being seen in civilian clothing. It was observed that several expresses, bound country wards, was quite deserted. Doubtless they were returning for another large consignment of Scouts. Arriving at Windsor

Station, we formed up behind several other troops, and duly commenced our 6 mile march through the Royal borough, accompanied by various Scouts bands. The chorus of Paul Rubens' song, "Boys, be Prepared" was a favourite tune to both rank and bands. The streets were all prettily decorated and several spectators lined the route. Lifeguardsmen and all soldiers whom we passed saluted us. We noted this little compliment keenly. Reaching the entrance to Windsor Great Park, we found it very bad going for about half a mile, and then we marched another two miles over the plain. Sitting easy a few minutes, we were soon ordered to take up our positions between two yellow flags, where we sat at ease again. Scarcely five minutes had elapsed before Harry Thompson created a mild surprise by appearing before us. He persuaded me to go back to the Surrey lines with him, which, with Mr. Bircham's consent I did. With his aid I made acquaintances with some of the Guildford Troops, and while with them I ate my rations, which Mrs. Bircham kindly supplied us. Harry and I wandered back to the Norfolk ranks, in which were several Mayford Scouts who were renewing the last night's acquaintances. Meanwhile, several other Scouts who had arrived later, were swarming on the ground. We watched them taking up their temporary positions with great interest. By noon, most of the 35,000 had assembled, and now the formidable task of getting us on to the parade ground was evolved. After much wheeling, marching, and counter marching, our proper formation was drawn up, and then we began our march on to the parade ground headed by the Colonial Flag-bearers and Kings' Scouts.

When in our right positions, we sat at ease, pending the arrival of their Majesties. Contrary to general expectation, Queen Mary was the first upon the scene, and as the band played the National Anthem, we all stood at the "Alert." Thus the greatest review of all times had begun. We were permitted to sit at ease again, but were soon summoned to the "Alert" again as the King's bodyguard could be seen winding its way through the dense foliage. The Chief Scout rode round the parade to make sure everything was ready, and he was accorded an ovation that would make any man's heart beat faster. As King George neared the saluting base, Sir Robert Baden-Powell advanced to greet him, and a lengthy conversation ensued. As each division was being inspected they stood at the "Alert" while the others remained sitting. As the procession was approaching us, we were called to the "Alert." Three soldiers on horseback headed it, then King George, beside whom was the Chief Scout. Among those who followed were Field Marshals Lords Roberts and Kitchener, Prince Christian, and two Indian Maharajahs, besides whom were four splendid Indian cavalry men. As this little cavalcade passed from view the out-riders of the Royal carriage came in sight. H.R.H. Prince Edward and Princess Mary occupied the front seats, and Queen Mary and Princess Christain sat behind. The first three were easily recognised, but the later quite mystified us. Three Lifeguardsmen brought up the rear. It was all over so quickly that we hardly realised that we had been inspected by our ruler and prospective Sovereign. We observed how interested the Royal children were. After the whole procession had passed our part of the semi-circle.

we sat at ease again, until it came at our rear again, when we turned right-about ready to receive His Majesty! The bright scarlet uniform of the Lifeguardsmen were soon lost in the sombre khaki with which we were apparelled. Again we sat down and followed the doings of the first division who were giving displays of fire lighting and ambulance work. In due time His Majesty and staff returned to the saluting base, when was witnessed the most inspiring incident of the day; viz., the 'Charge.' The Scouts rally rang out, and next we were commanded to "Charge!" Away we all rushed, one disciplined, headlong, precipitous dash, which threatened demolition to all who would oppose us; all calling his own patrol cry. The Curlews, Kangaroos, Fox, Hound, Snake, every conceivable bird, beast, and reptile was represented in that human khaki coloured surging mass. The ground was full of them, and as they swarmed over the plain great clouds of dust rolled up behind them. As suddenly as it commenced, so it ended, at a spot which only the Scouts themselves knew. Still and straight were the ranks, which appeared like the spokes of a wheel. A great white forest tipped with the buff hats of the 35,000 lads there soon sprang up as the command, "Hats on staves" was given. 35,000 hats on the top of 35,000 staves, and 35,000 throats let loose with cheers: it was a wonder that some of the grand old elms in that beautiful park were not uprooted. Cheers for the King were called for and as readily given; and then the Queen which met with an equal response; and not least though last, cheers were given for H.R.H. who has since honoured the movement by accepting the Chief Scoutship of Wales. The cheering continued for quite ten

minutes, completely drowning the strains of the band. Now and then we could catch strains of, "God bless the Prince of Wales." Like dutiful scouts, the whole parade stopped when commanded; but what a scene of unparalleled enthusiasm!! Well, the great review was over, but more than one wished it had only just started. Getting away as quickly as we could, another long march to Windsor Station awaited us, where we availed ourselves of an hour's rest. Many of us went 100 yards down the street, where we laid down on the grass. Passing a pump outside the Castle grounds, a photographer hailed us and snapshotted us, but unfortunately I have not been able to procure the result. At last our train was due, and it was a very tired, though happy party that alighted at Worplesdon, and marched to Beech Hill. Here an excellent supper awaited us, but we didn't half do justice to it as we were so tired. We soon settled down for the night; and weren't we soon asleep? Stuffing my haversack with dry grass which I had picked up coming from the station, I made an excellent pillow, and it took us less than five minutes to get to sleep. Yes, it was a very different camp to our first night! And so it jolly well had need to be!!

CHAPTER V.

THE LAST DAY—THE ZOO.

We took things easier on the Wednesday morning, having nothing definite in view. After attending to the usual routine, we breakfasted at 7.30, after which we sorrowfully bade Beech Hill goodbye.

Entraining at 8.30 to Waterloo, we passed Brooklands where we saw a monoplane in the air, which we greeted with immense cheering, upon which the aviator wheeled round and headed for the train. We soon left Brooklands at our rear, and many other stations flashed past us. We got to Waterloo at 11.30, and hoped to go to the White City, but as some had spent out and time was comparatively short, we decided to "do" the Zoological Gardens, which proved a most efficient substitute. Accordingly, we marched to the underground station, boarded the lift, and entrained, which produced a funny impression on most of us. Strap hanging appeared to be popular: when there were no seats available I mean! Still on the underground railway we reached Liverpool Street Station, where we discharged our surplus accoutrements. Here we saw an Essex troop who had camped on the park at Windsor. I gave one of its patrol leaders a Daily Mirror which he gladly accepted. Again patronising the tube, we railed to Regents Park, where we ate our lunch which Mrs. Bircham again provided. After having done that and also replenished our water bottles—which had been drained owing to the intensity of the heat—we marched to the Zoo, where we found another troop gaining admittance, one of whom was being overcome by the heat. Our assistant scoutmaster effectively treated him so that he was enabled to accompany his fellow members.

Firstly we did the deer department, and saw various species of American deer, caribou, elk, and moose. On the other side were Chinese pheasants, and

other gorgeous birds. Continuing, we made acquaintance with a buffalo, and then wandered into the reptile house, where divers specimens of lizards, newts, frogs, snakes, and crocodiles came to view. Thence to the lion house, where lions, tigers, jaguars, and leopards were inspected. One magnificent lion took a strong dislike to our standard, and showed his disapproval by emitting fearful growls, which started all other animals off, and every one showed signs of alarm—the public and animals too. We next did the inevitable, *i.e.*, the monkey house. Several small species attracted a good deal of attention, but at the further end a cage containing three black monkeys with white beards proved the premier attraction. One more active than his brothers would make a headlong dash for the side of the cage and perform a very creditable right-about, thus bringing his feet with mathematical precision to the boards which produced a resounding s-m-a-c-k! At first it was thought that he was banging his head, but he was not the chump he was taken to be! Needless to say he was well rewarded by the visitors. An orang-utang next claimed our attention. He was busy catching insects (imaginary or otherwise) with the aid of a bit of looking-glass. Thence to the bear house, and so to the African Landseer Lion which marked the entrance to the African collection. Nothing in particular called for our close investigation here. Coming to the great bear pit, we halted by a welcome refreshment stall which was besieged by a Scottich troop from Fifeshire. Prices were somewhat high, but the necessary cash was forthcoming, so all parties were satisfied. We fed the occupants of the bear pit, and enjoyed the spectacle of a

white (?) v black (?) bear fight. Of course it was Johnson v Jeffries over again, but Jeffries won this time after a very fast bout.

At last we had to leave, and passing the seals, sea-lions, and other aquatic animals, we made our exit, and awaited a 'bus. Boarding her we went to Liverpool Street, and retrieving our capes and haversacks, we entrained again, en route for Reepham. We kept in the same compartment right up to Norwich Thorpe, and consequently were glad of the opportunity which presented itself of stretching our legs for about half-an-hour. In Norwich, many, including myself, bought little things for their less fortunate brothers and sisters at home, while others bought little things as mementoes of their delightful trip. Reaching Thorpe Station at 6.45, I enjoyed ten minutes chat with a Thorpe Hamlet Patrol Leader who told me he was not one of those who had been to the Rally. Entraining once more, a very happy party approached Reepham with a feeling of gladness.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAST PHASE.

This chapter must of necessity be a short one, but the uniqueness of our situation demands one to itself.

At Cawston we parted company with Leonard Howard, and very soon after we detrained. There were a good many on the station to welcome us, and we felt like little heroes. Some were anxious parents or sisters, while others were there merely because their curiosity

was piqued. We drew up smartly into our respective patrols, as we had done throughout the whole campaign and proceeded to our club room in the Market Place, the crowd following. Standing two deep outside the club room, our Scoutmaster, in his address to us, thanked us for our attendance, and complimented us on our smart appearance, after which I led the first verse of the National Anthem. I am afraid our voices were spent, but we managed it satisfactorily; and then as a slight tribute to Mr. Bircham for his kindness and trouble, the leaders called for, "Hats on staves; three cheers for our Scoutmaster," which were given quite *a la mode de Windsor*. Mr. Bircham smilingly acknowledged his thanks, and then we were dismissed to our respective homes, after having spent the time of our lives.

I learned afterwards that the Cawston Brass Band had been approached to give us a welcome home, but negotiations had fallen through.

THE END.