

The Story of Gatehouse Guides by John Russell

The Girl Guides were set up in 1910 by Agnes Baden-Powell, sister of Lord Baden-Powell, as the girl's equivalent of the Boy Scouts. In 1915, the constitution for the Brownies was drawn up, their leaders to be known as Brown Owl and Tawny Owl. Later, companies of senior guides were formed, known as Rangers.

The 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Company of Girl Guides was the first to be established in the Stewartry on 18th February 1918. However, the Gatehouse of Fleet Guides had earlier connections with the Baden-Powell family. When Olave Soames, the future Lady Baden-Powell, was twelve, her family took Kirkdale House for a summer holiday. This introduced her to both Gatehouse of Fleet and the people living about it. So when the Chief Guide was looking for Commissioners in the Stewartry in 1916, it was natural that Miss Rhoda Rainsford-Hannay, Kirkdale should be chosen, and at the first conference of the Scottish Commissioners, Mrs Murray Baillie, Cushat Wood, was given the post of County Commissioner for the Stewartry, with responsibility for training. Miss Margaret Hotchkis of Twynholm had been the honorary secretary and treasurer of the Guide's Scottish Commissioners since 1913 — a task which she was to continue to 1934. In 1918, Lady Hope-Dunbar was elected President of the Stewartry Girl Guides.

The 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Company must have come together in 1917, as in January 1918 Mrs Murray Baillie advertised in the Kirkcudbrightshire Advertiser that she had organised the Gatehouse Company of Girl Guides in two patrols, the 'Heather' and the 'Thistle'. The officers of the company were Captain R.Hannay (Rhoda Rainsford-Hannay) and Lieutenants E.Smith and M.J.Mitchell. An entertainment had been held in the Masonic Hall at which she had explained the principles and objectives of Girl Guides. The entertainment had started with The Girl Guide Song, followed by the entry of the Red Indians, a recitation by Guide Freda Hunter, Welsh dancing by Patrol Leader Lesley McGlashan, a carol by Corporal Rita Hannah and Guide Joyce McGlashan, a recitation by Corporal Meg Mitchell, the Highland Fling by Patrol Leader Lesley Henderson, and a dialogue by Captain Hannay and Company Leader Miss E.Murray Baillie : Miss A.Phillips played the accompaniments. Colonel Rainsford-Hannay and Colonel Murray Baillie proposed votes of thanks, after which the National Anthem was sung.

And shortly afterwards, Mrs Murray Baillie held a meeting in Kirkcudbright to form a company there. Miss Mary Orr-Paterson (later Mrs Russell, Drumwalls) was appointed the troop Captain. The first camp for the Stewartry Guides was held at Kirkdale in July 1919. Mary Orr-Paterson wrote in the Minute Book :-

July 1919. A United Camp of Newton Stewart, Gatehouse of Fleet and Kirkcudbright Guides was held for a week at Kirkdale Home Farm. Both the Guides and Guiders enjoyed every minute of it. Betty Campbell, Effie Haining and Jeanie Campbell won their 'Cooking' badge there.

The companies were well and truly launched. The alternative of 'Guider' was introduced, as an alternative to the military rank of 'Captain'. The 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Company rapidly expanded to add a third patrol called 'Bluebell'. Miss Elizabeth Murray Baillie (later Mrs Murray Usher) became one of the patrol leaders in the early 1920s, together with Fanny Mitchell and Lesley Henderson.

Mrs Murray Baillie resigned as County Commissioner in 1921, succeeded by Mrs Cathcart, Kirkcudbright. Also at the end of that year, the Gatehouse of Fleet Brownies were registered, although nothing more is recorded of them for some years. In 1922, Mrs Malcolm Cross was appointed County Secretary for the Stewartry, and Rhoda Rainsford-Hannay took on the post of County Camp Advisor, a post which she held until 1927. She immediately organised a large camp at Ardwell (Ardwall?) which was inspected by Dr Goldie-Scott the Gatehouse doctor, who pronounced the arrangements satisfactory in every way : this description did not include the weather, which was spectacularly bad ! Between August 1922 and 1931, the Ravenshall Cadet Camp was held. Miss Rainsford-Hannay was part of Mrs Cathcart's party at the first World Guide Camp held in the New Forest in 1924.

In 1925, the Chief Guide, Lady Baden-Powell, visited Craignaw in Wigtownshire. Guides and Brownies from the Stewartry were present. Josephine Cross, a Brownie Sixer and daughter of Mrs Malcolm Cross, Cally House, was awarded the first Silver Cross for life-saving ever to be awarded to a Brownie. She had rescued a small boy from drowning, somewhere near Mossyard, perhaps during the County Camp which was held at Mossyard that year. She eventually became Mrs Ross and in due course County Commissioner.

In 1926, Lady Hope-Dunbar was succeeded as County President by the Countess of Galloway. In October of that year, Gatehouse of Fleet supplied some of the two hundred and thirty Guides and Brownies to a rally at Castle Douglas to meet the Scottish Commissioner, Mrs Houison Crawford. At the Historical Pageant held at Cumstoun on 10th June 1927 under the artistic direction of Jessie M. King, the Gatehouse of Fleet Company under Miss Rainsford-Hannay played 'The Fining of the Miller' (by King Edward I of England ?). In 1929, one of the three Guides' camps was held at Brighthouse Bay. In 1930, the County Rally held at Ernespie, Castle Douglas, took the form of a sports. In 1933, Evelyn Cochrane took over the Gatehouse Brownie troop. In that year, a Gatehouse of Fleet team of Guides won the Lady Hope-Dunbar Shield for juvenile dancing at the Galloway Musical Festival to Newton Stewart.

1934 saw two significant changes in officials, when Mrs Jameson, Gaitgil, took over the post of County Commissioner from Mrs Cathcart, and Miss Blair Imrie, Newton Stewart, took over the task of County Secretary from Mrs Malcolm Cross. The first written reference to the Gatehouse Brownies comes in 1935 : 'The Gatehouse Company and Pack had a church parade and a picnic. They are now knitting for the unemployed.'

In 1937, Miss M. Hotchkis, Twynholm, took over the post of County Secretary from Miss Blair Imrie. This was the coronation year of King George VI, and thirty Guides and three Guiders took part in a Youth Rally in Edinburgh. Josephine Cross, by now a

Guider, attended the international camp at Chigwell, Essex. The Guides' part in the procession in Gatehouse was rather less memorable : their decorated lorry broke down, and they had to walk ! Nevertheless, they enjoyed a successful coronation party. World War II cast a damper over the operations of the Guides — little petrol meant only very local journeys. Rhoda Rainsford-Hannay, the first Captain or Guider of the Gatehouse troop, died in 1941. But in about 1940, the honour of being entitled a Queen's Guide was introduced as the top award for Guides : two Gatehouse Guides were to earn this honour before the closing date of this history, the start of 1995.

Let us return to the early post-war days. The first post-war rally was held at Castle Douglas in 1945. In 1947, Margaret Hotchkis handed over the post of County Secretary to Mrs Fraser, Girthon Old Manse, and two years later Mrs Jameson handed over the post of County Commissioner to Mrs Blackett, Arbigland. In 1950, the 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Company had a roll of twenty three Guides. Evelyn Cochrane took over the Gatehouse Guides in addition to the Gatehouse Brownies. In that year, the Gatehouse Brownie Pack, eighteen strong, went to the Brownie Revels at Arbigland. Britain was the host country for the 13th World Conference of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in that year, forty years after the Guide movement was officially born. Twenty eight hand-painted Friendship Scrolls were to be handed on throughout Britain, much like the Olympic Torch. One such scroll started its journey in Islay. On 21st June 1950, the Gatehouse of Fleet Guides accepted the well-wrapped scroll from the Wigtownshire Guides at the bridge where Mary Queen of Scots once crossed the River Cree, and took it via Creetown, the Corse of Slakes and Anwoth Old Church to Cardoness Castle, where it remained overnight. The next day, they handed it on to Borgue Guides at the Gatehouse Town Clock, who took it past Plunton Castle and the Port of Borgue to Frenchman's Rock, and thence by boat across the Dee estuary to St Mary's Isle, and so to McClellan's Castle, where it was taken onwards by three Guides on horseback, Jean Drummond, Myrna Corrie and Jane Mitchell. A few days later, the scroll was brought to the County Rally held at Ernespie House with three hundred Guides present : its inscription was read by Mrs Blackett, it was passed round the company, and handed to Lady Hedley, Scottish International Guide Commissioner. The scroll then continued its journey westwards.

In 1952, Lady Logan, Skyreburn, took over the post of County Secretary from Mrs Fraser. In that year, the Chief Guide, Lady Baden-Powell, paid an official visit to Castle Douglas. Amongst the twelve Brownie Packs greeting her with a lusty 'Grand Howl' was the Gatehouse Pack, under Evelyn Cochrane. Then escorted by two sets of Sea Rangers, the Chief Guide moved on to the general meeting of the Stewartry Association in the Town Hall, presided over by the Countess of Galloway. She then passed on to the Drill Hall, where four hundred guides were waiting. In her speech, she recalled her early days at Kirkdale. The evening ended with camp fire songs and a dancing display by the Gatehouse guides - "Kenmure's on and awa". In that year, Mrs Lyon the Stewartry Badge Secretary issued seven first class badges, fifty six second class badges, one hundred and eight proficiency badges, three All Round Cords, and six Little House emblems : for the Brownies she issued twenty five golden bars and thirteen silver bars. Just how many of these came to Gatehouse of Fleet seems unknown.

In 1954, Mrs Josephine Ross, Netherhall, formerly Miss J.Cross, Cally, took over the post of County Commissioner. The Gatehouse Guides regularly took part in Scottish Country Dancing. A photo of the Gatehouse of Fleet Guides dance team of that year has survived :-



Left to right : Front Row, Elsie Proudlock, Margaret Carr, Margaret McKie, Christine Davidson, Mrs Parkhill. Back Row : Betty McCrone, Allie McQuarry, Mabel Proudlock, Essie Gilmour, Isobel Johnstone.

Mrs Ross held a rally at Netherhall in 1955 : Evelyn Cochrane the Gatehouse of Fleet Captain took the Gatehouse of Fleet Troop to this, and won the prize for First Aid. In 1955, the Gatehouse of Fleet Guides camped at Cardoness, and were visited by the Brownies.



The 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Guides at Lorne.

In 1956 when Captain Evelyn Cochrane was assisted by Lieutenant Molly Ingles and Cadet Jean McWilliam, members of the 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Guides went to the Guide Training Centre at Craigavad near Lorne in Ireland, where a special company camp was being held, photographed above : Mr Fitzpatrick lent his lorry, in which the troop had a jovial journey to the ferry at Stranraer. The captain, Evelyn Cochrane, is on the left of this picture, and Molly Ingles fourth from the left. The sixteen guides present were :-

Patrol 1. Alice Black, Adele Farmer, Bride Bryan.

Patrol 2. Lily McQuarrie, Beryl Pickthall, Barbara Ann Murray, Tamara Beck Slinn.

Patrol 3. Irene McInally, Ruth Cain, Sandra Henderson, Jean Patterson.

Patrol 4. Margaret Robb, Ruth Heron, Margaret Graham, Nessa Campbell, Shiela Craig.

It was Evelyn Cochrane's last year in charge of the 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Guiding Company, handling over to Margaret Bain.

Mrs Abbott, Roseville, was the Brownie's Brown Owl. The 1956 Brownie Pack Revels were staged at Airds of Parton, with a pageant based upon Peter Pan. The Gatehouse of Fleet pack took part. Twynholm provided Captain Hook and Southwick Peter Pan : other brownies played Fairies, Wolves, Pirates, Lost Boys and Red Indians. The 1957 Guides Centenary Pageant — 'Guiding through the Ages' -, one hundred years after the birth of Robert Baden-Powell, lost some of its atmosphere when it had to move from Ernespie garden to Wallets Mart due to heavy rain.

In 1958, Lady Logan handed on the task of County Secretary to Mrs Hutchison, Rockcliffe. In 1960, Golden Jubilee Year, the 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Guides were joined at their camp by Sissel and Tove Darlene, Norwegian Guides.



Margaret Bain is on the left of this photo, with Tove, Sissel, Vera Pickthall, Molly Hughes, Jacqueline McKenzie and some guides from Borgue.

The Golden Jubilee Rally that year was held at the Castle Douglas High School, where Mrs Jameson, the former County Commissioner, took the salute at a march past of every company and pack. In 1961, the Gatehouse of Fleet Brownies were commended for their smiling faces and obvious enjoyment at the Dumfries County Dancing Festival. In 1962, Mrs Jameson succeeded the Countess of Galloway as Stewartry

President, and Mrs Mitchell, Irongray, took over the post of County Commissioner from Mrs Ross. The 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Guides carried off the Rose Bowl and the new Patrol Cup at the Dumfries Festival of Scottish Country Dancing. In October 1962, the Chief Guide attended a rally of guides from all over Dumfries and Galloway in the Loreburn Hall :

Jacqueline McKenzie was one of the Colour Party. The Gatehouse of Fleet Brownies formed a guard of honour when their Tawny Owl, Miss Jean McWilliam, was married. When Mrs Davidson their Brown Owl departed in 1963, the Gatehouse of Fleet Brownies presented her with a bible. The 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Guides team who took part in the 1963 Newton Stewart Dance Festival were :-



Left to right, Yvonne Crosbie, Vera Pickthall, Ann Fergusson, Jacqueline McKenzie, Margaret Hunter, Jean Cluett, Eileen McLellan, Josephine Hope.

Jacqueline McKenzie was the first of the 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Guides to earn the honour of Queen's Guide, in 1963. A photo shows the presentation :-



Left to right, Mrs Abbott, Mrs Mitchell the County Commissioner, Miss Evelyn Cochrane, Miss Jacqueline McKenzie, Miss Margaret Bain.

In June 1965, 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Guides and Brownies formed part of the reception for the Queen and Prince Philip, who were due to land from the Royal Yacht at Kirkcudbright. Unfortunately the Queen was indisposed, but Prince Philip was welcomed ashore and spoke to some of the Gatehouse contingent.

In 1966, the Gatehouse of Fleet Guides were second in the Castle Douglas 'Ace of Clubs' competition, and again in 1967. A photo shows some of the entrants :-



Not the clearest of photos. Those in this photo were :

Front Row : Brenda McLeod, Christine Dougan, Brenda McKenzie, Audrey Patterson.

2nd Row : Jan Telfer, Elizabeth Dougan, Moyra Fitzpatrick, Lesley Duncan, Julia Kean, Marjory Harper.

3rd Row : Josephine McGivem, Roberta Cox, Cecelia Geddes, Sandra Gilmour, Allison Kean, Hazel Millar, Caroline Fergusson.

Back Row : Irene Harper, Eileen McGivem, Jeannie McKill, Susan Finlay, Lorna McLeod, Gail Holmes.

In 1967, Miss Ann Pollock, Gatehouse of Fleet, took over the post of County Secretary from Mrs Hutchison. 1970 was Diamond Jubilee Year, and a Scottish Lore Pageant was staged in Castle Douglas in May. Mrs Ross organised a Guide Adventure Day at Netherhall, including rafting on the River Dee and rope ladders on trees.

In 1971, Mrs Abbott, Roseville, succeeded Mrs Mitchell as County Commissioner. In 1972, Nancy Clark was the second Gatehouse of Fleet Guide to be awarded the honour of Queen's Guide. The Gatehouse of Fleet Brownies won the Nursery Rhyme competition for the Brownie Cup with 'Hey Diddle Diddle' and 'Hickory Dickory Dock'. In 1973, Mrs Abbott announced that 'Young Guiders' aged 16 to 18 would be known in future as 'Young Leaders', and would be helped by Mrs Wadsworth. Mrs Abbott was succeeded as Commissioner by Miss P.L.Bristowe, Balmaclellan, in 1974.

1977 was the Queen's Silver Jubilee, and to mark this the Guides held a celebration in the Cochrane Hall at Kirkcudbright. After the opening of the Scout Hall in Gatehouse of Fleet on Thinking Day 1978, the Brownie Pack and Guides held their meetings there. By 1980, the Guides were holding regular annual parties with the Scouts in the new Scout

Hall. In that year, the Gatehouse of Fleet Brownies formed part of the four hundred attending the Brownie Platinum Party at the Castle Douglas High School. In 1982, the Gatehouse of Fleet Brownies led by Mrs Jacqueline Wadsworth were again winners of the Brownie Cup. In 1983, the prowess of the 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Guides in the Scotchpotch Competition which involved singing, dancing and reciting, resulted in their being asked to present a programme at the Stewartry Girl Guides Association A.G.M. that year.

At a 1985 joint party with the 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Scouts, Andrew Low, the Scout Area Commissioner, presented the Best Patrol Shield, the Best Guide Shield and the Sister Gray Memorial Shield for First Aid. By then, the Guides were holding regular Easter Camps at Murrayton, Loch Grannoch or Craigancallie at the head of Clatteringshaws Loch for patrol leaders, and May week camps at Kirkdale Port.

1985 was the seventy fifth anniversary of guiding. A grand celebration of guiding was held at the Albert Hall. In June, a Grand Carnival was held in the Dalbeattie High School, with Lady Logan the County President present. In July 1986, the Rainbow Camp, Galloway Gallimaufry, was held in the Cally Estate on the flat land between Culreoch and Murrayton. The camp was organised by Pam Connor, the Stewartry camp adviser, assisted in many ways by the Gatehouse of Fleet Friends of Guiding. Some five hundred girls attended from all of Dumfries and Galloway. Mrs Livingston the county commissioner camped with them. Mrs Murray Usher, O.B.E., officially opened the camp on 6th July, and on Sunday the usual Guides Own Service was held. The ceremonial lighting of the camp fire on the Monday evening was carried out by Mrs Sheena Gardiner, Camp Consultant for Scotland. On Tuesday, the camp was graced by a visit from the Duchess of Buccleuch and Queensberry. Wednesday was sports day, and the afternoon visitors included the Scottish Chief Commissioner, Mrs G.D.M.Reid. On Thursday, the counties all had their own camp fires and entertainments, followed by a complete Camp Fire Spectacular on Friday. Saturday was camp striking day, and heading for home.



May Week Camp at Port Kirkdale - 1985



Susan Pickthall holding the light

In 1986, Mrs Mitchell, Irongray, took over the Presidency of the Stewartry Guides and Brownies from Lady Logan. The 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Guides started producing annual pantomimes :-

- 1986 Cinderella
- 1987 Snow-white
- 1988 Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves
- 1988 The Pied Piper of Hamelin



A joint party with the Scouts in 1989.

In 1988, Mrs Mary Riddick became District Commissioner of the Guides, until 1990. During 1991, it was recorded that the 1st Gatehouse of Fleet guides all learnt to knit.! At the end of 1992, Mrs Jacqueline Wadsworth, formerly Miss Jacqueline McKenzie, was appointed District Commissioner. Between then and the closing date of this history, the 'Look Wider' programme for girls from 14 to 25 was introduced. The Girl Guide Association became the Guide Association, with a new

Promise and changes to uniforms and handbooks. In 1993 the Gatehouse Guides and Brownies were part of the reception for the Queen and Prince Philip at the Tolbooth at Kirkcudbright. Guides camped at Craigencallie with Scouts, joined the Twynholm girls at the Dhoon, took part in Scottish country dancing, ten-pin bowling, etc, and held 'Penguin Parties' to raise funds for the Falkland Guides. The Brownie pack under Mrs Jennifer Raphael held a wonderful pack holiday at Wanlockhead.

1994, the last year to be covered by this history, saw a new Brownie Flag dedicated by the Rev. Austin Erskine. The Guides and Brownies had a fun day at the Scottish Guide Training Centre at Netherurd, and were part of the four hundred Guides and Brownies from all over the Stewartry who took part in the many activities. The Gatehouse Guides staged a fashion show — all outfits created from polythene bags!

Some of the Captains and Guiders of the 1st Gatehouse of Fleet Guides from 1917 to 1994

Miss Rhona Rainsford-Hannay
Miss Smith
Miss Mitchell
Miss Laurie
Miss Gunn
Mrs Cairns
Miss Molly Ingles
Mrs Laughland
Miss Evelyn Cochrane
Miss Elsie Proudlock
Miss Margaret Bain
Mrs Jean Sinclair
Mrs Margaret Grieve
Miss Jacqueline McKenzie (later Mrs Wadsworth)
Miss Josephine McGivern (later Mrs McCreath)
Miss Kathleen Davidson
Mrs King-Barker
Mrs Pam Mathews
Mrs Caroline Taylor
Mrs Mary Riddick
Mrs Hilary King
Mrs Honor McConchie
Miss Rosie Kneeshaw
Mrs Liz McRobert
Mrs Dela Triggs
Mrs Shiela Pickthall
Mrs Fiona Cannon (later Mrs McDonald)

Footnote The Rainbow Unit for girls aged five to seven was started in 1996.