

**REDSKINS IN EPPING FOREST:
JOHN HARGRAVE, THE KIBBO KIFT
AND
THE WOODCRAFT EXPERIENCE**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to locate and explore the world of the Kibbo Kift, a camping and handicraft organisation established in 1920, by John Hargrave. The Kibbo Kift proved to be the most controversial, complex and colourful component of the English Woodcraft movement.

The aim of this thesis is three-fold. First, to explain what is meant by the term Woodcraft and to examine the varied cultural influences that lay behind its growth in Edwardian England. Second, to give a more balanced and detailed historical account of the development of the Kibbo Kift, its secession from the Boy Scouts and its transformation into the Green Shirt Movement for Social Credit.

Finally, it will orientate the movement within the English pro-rural tradition. In doing so, I hope to develop the idea of there being a collection of diverse and often contradictory strands within this culture, with the Kibbo Kift occupying a so-called pastoral Liberal-Transcendentalist stance, in contrast to the more agrarian Tory-Organic wing of the movement. It will be argued that the Kibbo Kift was 'progressive', forward looking and essentially 'modern', representing, in effect, a suburban interest in the inter-war countryside. However, the ultimate failure of the Kibbo Kift's Woodcraft strategy adds to the argument that the English rural revival of this period was not as hegemonic as once thought and that pro-ruralism was limited in its cultural scope and impact.

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This work is dedicated to the memory of my father-in-law Jeremy Adams, (1943-1997). I hope it would have made him smile.

CONTENTS:

Introduction	6
 <u>PART A</u>	 38
<u>Chapter One: The Coming of Woodcraft</u>	38
<i>1. Woodcraft and the Industrial Age</i>	38
<i>2. The Open-Air Life and the Edwardian Imagination</i>	59
 <u>Chapter Two: Baden Powell and the Open-Air Life</u>	 75
 <u>PART B</u>	 108
<u>Chapter One The Coming of the Kindred</u>	108
<i>1. The Woodcraft of Black Wolf</i>	108
<i>2. The Woodcraft Rebellion</i>	115
<i>3. The Great War Brings It Home</i>	130
 <u>Chapter Two: The Way of the Kindred</u>	 156
<i>1. Inside the Lodges</i>	156
<i>2. The Flowering of the Kindred</i>	172
<i>3. Woodcraft and Social Credit</i>	181
 <u>Chapter Three: The Eclipsing of the Kindred</u>	 204
<i>1. Rolf the Ranger and the Kin</i>	204
<i>2. The Springhead Ring or Kin Garth?</i>	222
 <u>Chapter Four: From Kinsman to Green Shirt</u>	 251
<i>1. The First Green Shirts</i>	251
<i>2. The Triumph of Social Credit</i>	264
 Conclusion	 280
 Bibliography	 312

“We believe that we are doing noble work,” said Northover warmly. “It has continually struck us that there is no element in modern life that is more lamentable than the fact that the modern man has to seek all artistic experience in a sedentary state. If he wishes to float into fairyland, he reads a book; if he wishes to soar into heaven, he reads a book; if he wishes to slide down the banisters, he reads a book. We give him these visions, but we give him exercise at the same time, the necessity of leaping from wall to wall, of fighting strange gentlemen, of running down long streets from pursuers – all healthy and pleasant exercises. We give him a glimpse of that great morning world of Robin Hood or the Knights Errant, when one great game was played under the splendid sky. We give him back his childhood, that godlike time when we can act stories, be our own heroes, and at the same instant dance and dream.”

GK Chesterton: ‘The Tremendous Adventures of Major Brown’ in *The Club of Queer Trades* (London: 1905; this edn. London: Penguin 1984), p.26

“Have you ever seen the buffaloes roaming in Kensington Gardens...? Can’t you see the smoke rising from the Sioux lodges under the shadows of the Albert Memorial.”

Robert Baden-Powell

“A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth glancing at.”
Oscar Wilde

INTRODUCTION

In 1979 an extraordinary and unique document was deposited within the archives of the Museum of London: the *Kinlog*, or Great Log of the Kibbo Kift; the Woodcraft Kindred. Weighing some 40lbs and sitting in its own carved box, the Great Log is a hand written chronicle laid down on six hundred vellum pages between two ornate pigskin covers.

Yet this chronicle is of no ancient pedigree, despite its perfectly executed Ancient Briton-style calligraphy and its Anglo-Saxon metre composition: the book was actually begun in 1927. It is perhaps the one remaining and abiding memorial to a movement which once claimed that it would 'sweep all before it', but is rarely heard of today.

So who or what was the Kibbo Kift? 'Kibbo Kift' comes from an Old English dialect and is reputed to mean 'Great Strength' or 'Proof of Great Strength'. The name was given by one John Hargrave, the founder and leader of the Kibbo Kift. Hargrave was the inspiration behind one of the most colourful and exotic politico-cultural movements ever to have existed in Britain. Owing to the unusual nature of the Kibbo Kift and its leader, numerous myths and legends grew up around it, many of them home-grown, such as Hargrave's apocryphal autobiographical tale of the 'spiritual' genesis of the Kibbo Kift:

In my one-man tent at Lonecraft camp, on the hill top fringe of what was a splendidly majestic Buckinghamshire beechwood high above Latimer village, I made myself a jerkin and hood of Lincoln green cloth. When Will, the plowman from Black Farm caught sight of me in my outlandish outfit, leaping helter-skelter down the steep hillside from one humpy rabbit warren to the next at break-neck speed, like some long distance lung-gom-pa lama of Tibet in a desperate hurry, he brought old Blossom to a halt with a quiet 'Woo then, woo lass' and shouted over to his boy: 'Cor lummy – charlie! – 'Ere comes Robin – bloody - Hood!'¹

The next fifteen years or so were to see even stranger sights, not only in the villages around Latimer but all over the Home Counties and beyond, into Dorset, Devon and north up into the Midlands, the Peak District and the North-West in Lancashire and Manchester. 'Robin 'Ood' was gradually to find his 'Merry Men' and together they set off on a great 'Crusade' of Hiking and Camping, in the name of Health, World Government, and International Peace. Wearing medieval-style costumes, hoisting beautifully crafted banners, flags and standards, they struck the onlooker as being a highly organised and technically very proficient body of hikers, who were making hiking and camping into an art-form. Disciplined to an inordinate degree by strict ritual, both the men and women of the Kibbo Kift could be seen congregating at railway stations on a Friday evening, or a Saturday morning, before donning rucksacks and trekking off into the surrounding countryside for the weekend. Some hikes would be more strenuous than others: a 'social hike' would be designed to appeal to and cater for, friends, families and interested observers. Songs and shouts would often accompany them on their ten to twelve mile hikes. Other more arduous exercises were designed to test strength, endurance and initiative and could last anything up to seventy two hours, covering some twenty to thirty miles a day. Even at the dead of night, one might have caught a glimpse of strange lights signalling in the darkness, as hooded figures in green, silently slipped through woods and fields.

Hargrave gathered about him a loyal and dedicated band of young men, women, adolescents and children, who forsook their everyday names and were instead invested with a special 'Woodcraft' name, often 'Red-Indian' in derivation, which underlined the comradeship of the group. (Remembering their

days with the Kibbo Kift, many old members recalled that, in many instances one never got to know the 'real' names of even close friends until after the end of the Kibbo Kift.) Hargrave also had the ability to enthuse older people who chose to lend non-active support. As shall be seen, he garnered a healthy collection of distinguished patrons.

Hargrave was known to all as 'White Fox': it was a name that preceded the Kibbo Kift and, as we shall see, it was a name already familiar to the first generation of boys who had joined Robert Baden-Powell's 'Boy Scouts' in the years before the Great War. Hargrave had himself as a fourteen year old boy been one of the first to be enthused by reading the serialised instalments of Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys*, when it appeared in 1908. After joining the organisation, he quickly proved himself to be an able and talented outdoorsman, camper and naturalist. Still only a teenager, he quickly graduated to writing articles for the Scouting press. By 1913 he had published his first book, *Lonecraft*, a practical Camping guide for the 'Lone Scout': the Boy Scout too geographically isolated to belong to a regular troop or patrol. Written in easy-going, non-patronising style, complemented with illustrations by the author, the book was ensured popularity and success and it also established Hargrave as one of the best-known advocates for 'Woodcraft' in Britain.

Woodcraft is a problematic term: its original meaning pertained to the skills involved in forestry and, in particular, hunting in the forest. As the historian Tim Jeal notes, it was in North America that the word received the slightly altered meaning of 'self-reliance'. In the novels of Fenimore Cooper and Mark Twain, it came to refer to "a knowledge of forest conditions which would enable a man to support himself in the wilderness and to thrive there, without

help from the civilised world of towns and cities".² By the end of the nineteenth century it had come to mean something more: Woodcraft was seen as a method of 'outdoor' training, based on an application of primitive and ancient skills, that would reinvigorate, both physically and spiritually, the practitioner. Furthermore, Woodcraft was meant to be especially beneficial in the upbringing of boys and male adolescents. This was 'confirmed' with the unprecedented success of Baden-Powell's Boy Scout movement. What is more, in the climate of female suffrage, there seemed little reason why Woodcraft training should not also be applied to girls and women as well.

Woodcraft meant more than mere 'survivalism': it implied a positive prospering from the ability to live comfortably out of doors. The true 'Backwoodsman', as the Americans called him, was physically, mentally and spiritually self-sufficient. Woodcraft involved not only the ability to camp out in the woods, and go 'Tramping' (a preferred term for what in the mid-1920s Britain became known as 'Hiking') but a whole host of associated activities, from the ability to find and cook one's food out-of-doors, for example, to tracking ('spooring'), first-aid, swimming and canoeing; as well as a host of craft activities such as working with wood, metal, leather and ceramics, sketching and painting. Study of the natural world, of animal and herb lore and 'signcraft' (smoke signalling, codes, and secret languages,) was also encouraged, alongside archery, javelin throwing, song, dance, puppetry and story telling.

Woodcraft was an original and important component of Scouting, indeed it was that which attracted Hargrave to the movement in the first place. Baden-Powell was himself a keen 'Woodcrafter', but it was Hargrave who constantly

stressed the essential importance of Woodcraft in the Scouting movement, before finally making it the focus for a new organisation that was to spring from the loins of the Boy Scouts after the Great War and which sought nothing less than a re-working of Western civilisation.

Dispensing with the need for a detailed, orthodox political programme, the Kibbo Kift set out to transform the British way of life. This was to be achieved not through the ballot box or Parliament, nor through 'revolutionary methods' such as the General Strike or political violence, but through a method that blended Utopianism and Fabianism into a philosophy that would 'permeate' society from the bottom upwards, through 'living example'. With a sympathetic, but cautious wave in the direction of Nietzsche and the Eugenics movement, the Kibbo Kift declared itself to be the beginnings of a new branch of the human species. They were to be the pioneers who, through careful selection and preparation, were to set about the moulding of a healthier, fitter, more intuitive, balanced and rational human being: a 'New Model Army' of World Citizens, dedicated to overcoming the contradictions of Industrial Society.

Today the Kibbo Kift is very much a forgotten venture. Unlike the two other main Woodcraft groups that sprang up in the inter-war years in Britain, the 'Order of Woodcraft Chivalry' (which broke away from the Boy Scouts in 1916) and the 'Woodcraft Folk' (itself an offshoot of the Kibbo Kift) the Kindred, arguably the most impressive and with the most potential, failed to survive the inter-war years. Even in their hey-day of the mid-1920s it can hardly be said that they burnt themselves onto the consciousness of the great mass of ordinary Englishmen. The Kibbo Kift never did find their way onto the national stage, though Hargrave did achieve relatively more success when he performed

a remarkable and lengthy *volte face*, and transformed the Woodcraft Kindred into an urban political party, the 'Green Shirts', the militant wing of the Social Credit movement in the early 1930s.

Newspapers liked to regard the Kibbo Kift as providing a useful photographic opportunity, complete with witty caption, especially at Easter or Whitsuntide (two important dates in the Kibbo Kift calendar, the first being when they held their major annual hike, the second the time for their annual general meeting, or 'Althing', as it was known.) People who expressed an interest in the organisation, through chancing upon a Kinsman or Kinswoman and who wished to seek out more of what lay behind the ritual and costume, often came away even more confused. General sympathy for the Kindred's ideals and method rarely translated into concrete gains for the movement. For example, the Kibbo Kift Art Exhibition, held at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in April 1929, attracted over 42,000 visitors, yet membership remained in the hundreds.

This thesis aims to explore and to examine the origins and sources of the Woodcraft method, its progress within the Kibbo Kift, up to and including the slow transformation of the Kindred into the Green Shirts, until the final abandonment of Woodcraft by Hargrave. Such an approach allows one to investigate in detail the somewhat reclusive history of the so-called 'Open-Air movement' that gathered momentum in Edwardian Britain as well as the 'New Romanticism' of the 1920s and 1930s. The Kibbo Kift took much of its motivation and impetus from the pre-war Health and Leisure culture, as well as the pessimism of National Efficiency, yet combined it with a fierce post-war idealism and optimism. As Jay Winter points out, it is very easy to exaggerate

the 'rupture of 1914-18' in British culture and the Kindred provides an excellent vantage point from which to explore expressions of the 'modern' and 'archaic' in the post-war society.³ However it should be noted that the Kindred (and thus the Woodcraft Folk) as well as the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry, would not have been born but for the trauma of the Great War. Woodcraft had its 'natural' home within the Boy Scouts. The Kindred and the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry were both a reaction against the militarism of the Scouts and a response to the post-war world. It should also be kept in mind that the Kindred was indeed part of the so-called European 'Youth movement' and, as such, was comprised mostly of adolescents and young adults, many of whom were too young to have fought in the war. They displayed a genuine belief that they were growing to maturity in a new epoch, in which they were to be the builders of a new world, fashioned out of the destruction their parents' generation had wrought.

As Frank Trentmann has argued, the inter-war Open-Air movement in Britain has tended, in the past, to be viewed solely through a 'political lens', primarily in the context of 'Baldwin's Britain', with historians becoming increasingly frustrated by the lack of political 'punch' in large sections of the movement.⁴ This frustration stems from the fact that enjoyment of the countryside via camping, hiking, cycling or caravanning did not seem to carry an overtly 'political' message. Many ordinary people were simply content just to enjoy their leisure time and indeed the Kibbo Kift itself claimed it was 'apolitical'. However the Open-Air activities of individuals and groups, both mainstream and fringe, contained within them a subtle blending of varied philosophies, often lending themselves to unorthodox political conclusions.

After all, being 'apolitical' involves a 'political' viewpoint and it could be argued that this is, in itself, a political position.

Trentmann also notes that the New Romanticism of the British inter-war Open-Air movement was of a singular and peculiar type, differing from its predecessors and its continental contemporaries in its appraisal of 'modernity'. Its essentially apolitical or 'anti-political' character is a good example, while the complex and competing strands of the movement undermine the notion of an homogeneous, unifying "aristocratic, conservative pastoral myth" which, according to some historians, is supposedly at the heart of all pro-ruralism.⁵ The Open-Air life has been an easy target for historians eager to fire away at the 'sitting ducks' of sentimentality, nostalgia, reaction and Utopianism that have infected British or, more especially, 'English' cultural identity. It is hoped that this thesis will locate the Kibbo Kift within the experience of New Romanticism, as well as contribute to a broader picture of this aspect of British social and cultural history. It will argue that the Kindred held to a distinctly 'progressive' political agenda and that its 'Utopianism' was of a peculiarly 'English', as opposed to continental, variety: idiosyncratic, pragmatic and non-threatening. The notion that the more radical and political wing of the Open-Air movement, expressed in the slogan 'Back-to-the-Land', was inherently reactionary, unrealistic and 'anti-modern' in this post-Communist, 'post-modern' Green Age, seems rather tired and unconvincing. Those in this 'deeper green' pro-rural camp of the inter-war years often saw themselves as being more 'modern' than their critics. Industrial society and its ideological buttresses of Liberalism and Materialism could be attacked as a vestige of the nineteenth century and no longer suited to the new century. Going 'Back-to-the-Land' was

not necessarily a refusal to face up to the challenges of a changing society, rather, it could be seen in the light of a pioneering attempt to 'break the cycle' of industrial growth and collapse, a bold challenge in the face of an inherently unstable and unsustainable social order. The argument was simple: first principles needed to be re-examined, society needed to re-orientate itself before blindly pressing ahead and priorities needed to be assessed. Man should look to a post-industrial future, conscious of the natural world around him, its fundamental laws and his place within that world.⁶ Father Vincent McNabb, a Dominican Friar and an influential figure in G.K. Chesterton's Distributist League, stated that the aim was not "to return the people to what is primitive, but to what is primary."⁷

H.J. Massingham, a popular writer on rural themes in the 1930s and 1940s, believed this form of ruralism was 'radical' in the true sense of the word: it wanted to reach the *root* of the problem, it expressed a return to fundamental biological truths. Mankind must, in effect, learn to "progress backwards."⁸

Because of their apparent insignificance and limited success, few historians have paid much attention to the three foremost exponents of Woodcraft culture in Britain.⁹ Research into the field of the English Youth movement began in the 1970s, with historians such as Springhall, Prynne, and Wilkinson leading the way with a number of articles, books and contributions.¹⁰ John Springhall noted that much more needed to be done in this field, especially in looking at the Youth movement experience "from below", in order to evaluate its social and cultural impact, as well as its political significance.¹¹ Trentmann agrees, stating that still "surprisingly little" is known about "the culture that informed the open-air movement in the early twentieth century, let alone the

mentality of the average member of these groups".¹² Such studies that do exist rarely make mention of the existence of Woodcraft.¹³

Others, such as John Finlay, the Canadian historian of Social Credit, have looked at the Kibbo Kift's 'Woodcraft phase' as the rather naïve precursor to the more politically significant Green Shirt/Social Credit incarnation. Historians of the Boy Scout movement and of Baden-Powell, have examined the Woodcrafters and Hargrave, only in so far as they provide a stringent critique of Scouting in the immediate post-war environment.¹⁴ This critique was potent enough still to be able to draw the disdain of the official spokesmen for the Boy Scouts in the 1960s:

Every movement, in fact every community, has its discontented men, men whose abilities have not, (in their estimation,) been recognised or properly used, men who believe that the only good ideas are their own ideas, men who all their lives remain spoilt adolescents who turn difficult whenever they are opposed.¹⁵

It should be stressed at the outset that Hargrave was to vehemently deny that the Green Shirts were an admission of the failure of the Kibbo Kift or that the Woodcraft outlook had been invalidated. Rather he insisted that the original Kibbo Kift/Woodcraft ideals and 'spirit' had never wavered, that they had in fact infused the Green Shirts (many of whom were originally Kindred) and only the method had changed. Social Credit, not Woodcraft, was now the priority 'weapon' to be wielded in the bid to hasten the coming epoch. Like the Paleolithic Nomads, from whom they drew much inspiration, there could be no room for carrying unnecessary or superfluous 'baggage' along their trail. Anything which could no longer be made use of, or that had outlived its time, had to be jettisoned.

Camping, nature-lore, Woodcraft, and Rambling in Britain had, from the late nineteenth century and 1900s onwards, been gradually fusing with a generally Leftist philosophy that predicted the coming dawn of a 'New Age', of human co-operation, social justice, health and international peace. Much of this was to survive the Great War although large sections of the mainstream Open-Air movement remained unaffected. The reasons why this should be the case are interesting but even more intriguing is trying to understand a minority movement that believed the coming World State would be carried in on the broad backs of an army of hikers and campers.

One of the reasons for studying the Woodcraft movement, and the Kibbo Kift in particular, is to look again at those murky areas of our political and cultural past, glossed over by those more interested in the 'grand events' and 'big movements' of history, in order to look at their impact and to assess the contribution they made to British social and cultural development. As James Joll put it: "If the aim of the historian, like that of the artist, is to enlarge our picture of the world, to give us a new way of looking at things, then the study of failure can often be as instructive as the study of success."¹⁶

James Webb also believed that the study of minority, unorthodox or eccentric groups and individuals can act as a mirror to established society, perhaps revealing more about us in areas that a more direct study would overlook or miss. One should not be afraid of the chance to rummage through the 'dustbin of history', because "it is well-known that garbage men are often connoisseurs of human nature."¹⁷

Yet the question remains: does a tiny organisation like the Kibbo Kift warrant close historical attention? Did Hargrave's decision in 1951 to wind up

the 'Social Credit Party' (as the Green Shirts became in September 1935) and officially abandon the Kindred not indicate to future historians that such an effort would be fruitless? Was not the Kindred just one more Utopian butterfly broken on the hard wheel of twentieth century political realities?

One might be tempted to answer that the extraordinary career of John Hargrave (in his time he was an artist, illustrator, Boy Scout Commissioner, a sergeant in the Royal Army Medical Corps, author, poet, lexicographer, inventor and psychic healer) is in itself part of the justification. Many have commentated on his unusual personality: Leslie Paul, the author and Youth leader, recalled as an ex-Kinsman, the "consciousness of greatness that surrounded Hargrave like an aura."¹⁸ The historian Anna Bramwell gave Hargrave the dubious accolade of being, in her eyes, the nearest thing England had to a Hitler, while Springhall likened Hargrave to Mosley, "with whom he had much in common."¹⁹ Even one of Hargrave's former lieutenants from the 1930s gave a disturbing picture of Hargrave the autocrat: "It terrifies me to think of what would have happened if he had become dictator of Great Britain. There would have been a bloodbath all over the place..."²⁰ Even Finlay had to give Hargrave credit for being able to make a hall of non-Kibbo Kift delegates, attending a conference on the so-called 'New Economics', stand at his bidding.²¹

The second part of the answer returns to Trentmann's point that it depends on whether one solely concentrates on the early twentieth century's New Romantics from a political perspective, or from a social and cultural point of view. Efforts have, by and large, used the former method, yielding disappointing and incomplete results. For example, Finlay dismissed the Kibbo Kift's practices as "ludicrous" and Hargrave's philosophy as "pretentious and

muddled.”²² Rosenthal was equally frustrated by Kibbo Kift ceremony, language and activities, regarding the Kindred as “a fantastic farrago of eclectic ideas about human nature, economics and politics, all shrouded in obscure rhetoric and rooted in quaint ritual.”²³

This does not seem much of an improvement on a 1950’s view which stated that they “elaborated the primitive element and developed precious mysticisms which went with jerkins and long-haired politics – jibbalms and gibberish would be the rude way of putting it.”²⁴ The dominant view is one of the Kibbo Kift being altogether impenetrable, at best irrelevant and at worst a sinister proto-Fascist group.

Therefore, it might well be beneficial to begin by viewing the Kindred as primarily a ‘cultural’ organisation with a political agenda, as opposed to a ‘political’ group with a cultural method. Of course this cannot apply to the Green Shirts, who became an ‘orthodox’ political party, reducing the cultural side dramatically. Indeed, one might even be tempted to go so far as to label the Kibbo Kift as a ‘leisure movement’ with a political angle. Such a description would have undoubtedly raised the wrath of Hargrave, who constantly hammered home the point that the Kindred was not simply ‘just another camping club’. However, Hargrave’s political ends were to be achieved by cultural means, of which ‘leisure’ was a vital component: the Kibbo Kift described itself as a Camping Handicraft World Peace Movement. The first step in the bid for World Peace, though, was Health. The basis for any sane, rational and peaceful society was a healthy body: ‘First the Body, then the Mind, then the Spirit’. This is not surprising. The very beginnings of the Open-Air movement in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the 1900s was linked

with demands for better standards of health care in the population as a whole. In 1910 the Amateur Camping Club's journal *Camping* boldly stated the tent's 'progressive' mission: namely, the counter-acting of evil influences and conditions that have come about from "the excessive growth of urban districts."²⁵ Holbrook Jackson writing in *Health and Efficiency* magazine in 1919 reiterated that leisure and recreation were vital for the health of society and that men must safeguard "the art of play". He finished with the grandiose prediction that "the battle for reconstruction will be won on the playing fields and playrooms of the commonwealth."²⁶

Hargrave was well aware of the strengthening links between leisure, sport and politics that had been growing across Europe in the nineteenth century. Politicians and activists of all shades were conscious of the ever increasing importance of sport in particular, as a political tool. (As examples, one could point to the *Sokol* movement in building 'nationalist consciousness' in Bohemia, the German Social Democrats' extensive cultural programme, or the 'internationalism' of Baron de Coubertin's Olympic revival.) Woodcraft provides an interesting example of just such a political-cultural experimentation in Britain.²⁷

Another reason to focus on the Kibbo Kift is the historical study of contemporary 'alternative' culture, the plethora of 'new' ideas, attitudes and lifestyles that seem to be gathering momentum in Western Europe and the United States as we approach the Millennium. The very name most commonly used today to describe the late twentieth century's 'spiritual Reformation', the so-called 'New Age', is one that was used as the title of that celebrated *avant-garde* Edwardian journal, made famous by A.R. Orage and Holbrook Jackson.

The New Age was an eclectic debating arena for a whole welter of political ideas (most famously Guild Socialism) and the so-called New Economics (including Social Credit) as well as discussion of artistic and literary trends.

The history of Europe's counter-culture is a continuous thread waiting to be unravelled and James Webb and Anna Bramwell in particular are pioneers in their work of cutting back the thorny tangle of this multitude of extraordinary ideas and groups.²⁸ The Woodcraft movement is part of that tradition. Springhall predicted that the Woodcraft groups might come to be seen as having more of an impact on Youth culture and the creation of the 'alternative society' in the post-1945 world, than would the more "staid, uninspired and unimaginative" conventional English youth organisations.²⁹ As Rolf Gardiner, a one-time Kinsman and influential link-man between the English and European Youth movements in the inter-war period, wrote in 1943: "When the story of the twentieth century comes to be written and the causes and movements which brought about the great revulsion from industrialism are the subject of historical record, it will be found that it was the Youth of Europe which took the lead."³⁰

As shall be seen, the origins of the Woodcraft movement are wide and varied. They belong partly in the late Victorian 'Back-to-the-Land' impulse that prompted a whole collection of men and women to seek the 'Simple Life', for the sake of political reform, revolution, economics, religion, health reform, or just for plain, personal reasons. Food reformers, dress reformers, homeopaths, pantheists, occultists, folklorists and animal rights activists were to mix with a variety of land reformers, anarchists, socialists, liberals and nationalists to form the beginnings of what Webb called, "the Illuminated Underground."³¹ They formed the backbone of what Holbrook Jackson identified in the 1890s as "the

revolt against rationalism and the revival of mysticism.”³² Predicting the imminent implosion of capitalist, industrial society, they prepared for future worlds, consisting, to a greater or lesser degree, of ‘harnessed technology’, environmental equilibrium and the ‘Leisure State’. ‘Illuminated’ argument combined with reasoned debate, but also alternative forms of lifestyle would be the means to usher in the ‘New Age’.

This concept of the New Age was a distinctive feature of the *fin-de-siecle* and twentieth century’s ‘modern’ movement. It rejected the tired old shibboleths of nineteenth century empiricism and positivism. It signified a growing disillusionment and pessimism with the contemporary society. Inspiration was sought from a vast pool of ‘rejected knowledge’, ‘alternative’ sciences and both ancient Christian and Eastern mysticism. Although amazingly diverse and often contradictory, this came to constitute the so-called ‘Occult Revival’. Within this movement discontent was often expressed in the context of an apocalyptic vision of destruction, harking back to the Christian tradition of the Ending of the World. As is usual with most apocalyptic prophecies, the destruction is not universal: a few would survive, purged and indeed strengthened by the firestorm that engulfs society and it is they who as the ‘chosen few’ will go on to build Paradise on Earth.

Part of the reason for the energy behind the Occult Revival was the widespread decline in organised orthodox religion. The rise of secularism, the loss of faith and the diminishing power of the established churches were widely identified as hallmarks of the new modern age. Max Weber drew attention to this time of disenchantment calling it *Entzauberung*, Sigmund Freud labelled it *Unbehagen*, while Benedetto Croce saw it leading only to “irrationalism and

debauchery.”³³ The accelerating advance of science and technology were inevitably leading to a ‘loss of innocence’. They were eroding the traditional picture of a Divinely ordained and structured universe. Etymological scholarship and archaeology were also contributing to this undermining of Biblical authority: Christ was being reduced to an historical figure, a great teacher certainly, but only one ranking alongside the Buddha, Socrates, Confucius and Lao-Tse.³⁴ However while there was an undeniable reduction in the loss of church power, secularism failed to extinguish the appeal of spirituality. Instead the spiritual dimension came to be sought in alternative forms, often couched in occult and mystical forms as a way, as Peter Washington puts it, of “saving the spiritual from the corrupting effects of religious influences.”³⁵

This Occult Revival did not however entail a return to mere blind faith and unquestioning obedience. Science could work in conjunction with the new spirituality to further ‘enlighten’ the human mind and consciousness. Observation, intellectual understanding and ‘the power of the mind’ were just as important tools as ‘the power of the heart’ in the search for enlightenment. Spiritualism, a popular source of Occultism for the late Victorian middle-classes, looked to science to provide evidence in support of its claim to lift the curtain onto the ‘other world’. The Society for Psychical Research, for example, founded in 1882 and boasting such eminent patrons as Gladstone, Tennyson and Ruskin, undertook a rational, scientific, yet sympathetic exploration of occult phenomena.

Coinciding with and reinforcing the Occult Revival, with its emphasis on intuition, will, consciousness and the imagination, came the emergence in the early twentieth century, of psychoanalysis and its attempt to unravel the

subconscious. Henri Bergson's (a former President of the Society for Psychical Research) Vitalist ideas concerning the 'Life Force' and Nietzsche's demolition of bourgeois mores and ideals and his emphasis on will and the fact that his 'superman' corresponded to occultist matters of self-transformation and spiritual evolution, also excited the Illuminated proponents of the New Age. Alfred Orage, a friend and associate of Holbrook Jackson popularised Bergson and Nietzsche in Edwardian Britain, while also exploring their occult significance. Gustav Le Bon (though a confirmed sceptic in matters of mysticism) and George Sorel were also expounding the importance of 'myth', imagination and emotion in the understanding of what motivates people, particularly 'the Crowd'. Although their influence on later political movements (especially Fascism) is well known, they also exerted an indirect influence on a generation of idealist social reformers, many of whom were 'Illuminated'.

The Kindred was only one of the many twentieth century manifestations of this Occult Revival. Despite Hargrave's assertion that there was nothing in the Kin for people who "turn tables, read thoughts, speak with tongues, gaze into crystals", the Kin attracted many men and women seeking a spiritual dimension and some form of 'self-realisation'; indeed, Kibbo Kift Lodges were to be found engaging in a variety of 'esoteric' exercises.³⁶ The Kindred often spoke of itself as embodying a 'religious impulse'. However there was to be no restriction or limitation for those seeking 'Hidden Wisdom': the so-called 'Great Mystery' was open to all those prepared to look. The Kibbo Kift asserted that the hidden wisdom is within oneself but it was not so much 'hidden' from the world as 'neglected'. The 'wisdom' was that of the primitive world of instinct,

intuition and balance with the natural world. The Kibbo Kift was to be 'super-human' rather than 'super-natural'.³⁷

It is also significant to note the level of similarity between the stated aims of the Kindred and the Theosophical Society. Both shared the objective of forming a 'nucleus' which would 'seed' a 'Universal Brotherhood of Humanity'. Both also encouraged the study of the comparative religions, beliefs and mythologies, coming to the conclusion that "all gods are but the expression of the One." All primitive cults and sects were likewise but a valid expression of the one source.³⁸ Theosophists were embarked on a similar quest for knowledge of the Divine reality, 'the Key', that underpins the Universe. The search for the source of the original human expression of religion was tied in with the search for the original tongue from which all languages must have derived. Indeed Theosophists were keen to search for any evidence that proved that mankind derived from one original race, in order to justify the 'logic' that some form of 'world government' was appropriate for the next stage in human evolution.³⁹ This race had developed and changed over vast swathes of time, not the few thousand years of pre-Darwinian Biblical history, but now the New Age predicted the coming unity of mankind.

Bramwell also points to the significant influence exerted by the German biologist Ernst Haeckel on 'Illuminated', New Romantic and Progressive politics and culture. Haeckel's so-called 'Monism' provides further clues as to the 'modern' feel surrounding the Kibbo Kift. He combined a commitment to scientific integrity with spiritual insight. His holistic model of a universe, unified, balanced and composed of one spirit of "one common fundamental law", lent credence to the growing cult of pantheism. Haeckel asserted that it

was 'rational' and 'scientific' to live by Nature's benign rules and thus to worship Nature. The universe was indeed essentially benevolent, so co-operation and altruism were seen as 'natural' instincts. Even more exciting was the belief that man had the power within himself to 'progress', not only to change and re-shape his environment, but also to 'perfect' himself. *The Monist* scientific journal in 1890 wrote:

The new factor introduced with man is a voluntary co-operation in the process of evolution, a conscious upward striving towards a higher condition, a pressing forward toward an ideal. Man, contrary to all else in nature, is transformed, not in shape by external environment, but in character by his own ideals.⁴⁰

Haeckel drew political conclusions from his scientific studies, arguing that the ideal State should, like the brain and the nervous system, be centralised and bound together, not by coercion but by a sense of duty, altruism and responsibility. Not surprisingly his ideas were extremely popular in the German Social Democratic Party in the years before the Great War. Although a pacifist and an internationalist, he also shared with British Fabians a similar suspicion of democracy due to his perception of the failure of non-expert, unscientific delegates to comprehend the inordinate complexities of man and society.⁴¹

The expositions of such 'progressive' aims thus created a new, natural affinity between the world's temporal sphere, embracing social reform, and the world of the spirit. 'Illuminates' and Progressives mingled freely. The Fabian Society with its origins in the Fellowship of New Life is a good example. Two of the founding members, Frank Podmore and Edward Pease, had met through an interest in the occult and it was whilst they were involved in an investigation of a haunted house in Notting Hill that they entered into a discussion of the ideas of Henry George. Edith Nesbit, the wife of another leading Fabian Hubert

Bland, was also a member of the magical order 'Stella Matutina' and H.G. Wells assisted in the founding of the Spiritualist Survival League; even George Bernard Shaw was persuaded to go ghost-hunting in Clapham.⁴² Annie Besant provides another example of an extraordinary Illuminated political career which ranged from Fabian socialist and birth-control campaigner to anti-vivisectionist and 'Grand Old Lady' of the Theosophical Society. Anna Kingsford was another socialist and fierce animal rights campaigner who launched a 'psychic war' against the scientists Paul Bert, Claude Bernard and Louis Pasteur for their use of animals in experimentation. She went on to found the Hermetic Society which maintained close links with the Theosophists (and even at one stage claimed to be the reincarnation of Mary Magdalene.)⁴³ The Kindred, having their roots in this tradition, were idealists *par excellence*. They responded and contributed to that second wave of Utopianism that had been gathering energy during the Great War and which crashed on to the European shoreline in its immediate aftermath. They held dear to the Utopian belief that before one could hope to change society one must change oneself. *The Washington Post* at the turn of the century had commented that while man was about to enter a new era equipped with science, technology and art, still "his primeval appetites and passions" were untouched.⁴⁴ The Kindred viewed these 'primitive' emotions, not with horror and apprehension but with the belief that the completion of a 'natural', healthy humanity lay with the harnessing of these forces. Thus the Kindred through its early years of trial and innovation came to view itself, in its most extravagant form, as the instrument by which a 'New Way of Life' might come into being, brought about by a 'New Man', physically, intellectually and spiritually superior to the Masses of the contemporary industrial world. The

Kindred's distinctive dress and their language and ritual not only drew them apart from the masses, but also gave out a clear message of the radical nature of the impending transformation of modern life which they intended to 'steward'. This would see veritable Kibbo Kift 'Supermen' who, unlike the 'Blond Beasts' of Nietzsche, would seek to impart their qualities and talents for their so-called 'World Service', by serving the interests of the local community, region and Humanity at large.

This thesis also seeks to develop the idea put forward by Avner Offer, that two discernible strands are evident in the pro-rural Romantic sentiment that has evolved over the last two centuries in Britain.⁴⁵ On the one hand it will be argued that a 'Liberal Transcendentalist' position can be seen, exemplified by the ideal of the 'the Wanderer' or 'Nomad' and on the other a 'Tory Organic' stance, focussing on the example of the 'Peasant' and 'Farmer'. As Offer points out, on the whole these two positions sought the same ideals and "contest[ed] the same terrain", though their differing philosophical bases often led to mutual hostility and suspicion.⁴⁶

These differences can be discerned in a variety of examples such as the debates regarding rights of access to the land, the future of British farming, Land Reform, the issue of smallholdings and the question of 'Tenant farming' as opposed to 'Yeoman farming'. Broadly speaking the Tory-Organic position was that if a society distances itself too much from its agricultural matrix its destruction will not be far away. They sought therefore a 'radical' (in H.J. Massingham's sense of the word) undertaking to go back to the land. This expressed itself in the 1930s via demands for holistic, mixed farming, supplemented by decentralisation and pro-regional political and economic

policies that would restore health, community and, most importantly, agricultural self-sufficiency to Britain.

The Liberal-Transcendentalists were more concerned with restoring the balance between Town and Country, protecting the landscape from the ‘excesses’ of Industrial society for the ‘enjoyment’ of all. The land was, of course, still a working environment, but it was also an ‘urban amenity’. This inevitably led to ideological clashes with landlords and farmers over rights of access to land and differing attitudes to wilderness areas, for example. A physical manifestation of the clash between these two divergent traditions, came unexpectedly at the so-called ‘Battle of Kinder Scout’ in 1932 when ramblers and landlords fought over the ‘right to roam’ across the Derbyshire Peak District. The Liberal-Transcendentalist strain reflected the growing realisation of and resignation to the pre-dominance of the urban life over the rural in modern England in contrast to many of her continental neighbours. As Peter Mandler points out: “the (English) peasantry had been effaced long ago; there was no opportunity of modernising it and there was to be no serious attempt to re-establish it.”⁴⁷

The Kindred were an early reflection of the inter-war growth in hiking and camping and they thus formed part of the Liberal-Transcendentalist tradition. With ever larger numbers of people entitled to paid annual holidays, leisure was booming. The countryside became an affordable and accessible popular holiday destination, especially to the younger generation who saw the essentially collective nature of hiking as an ideal venue for the mixing of the sexes. Estimates vary as to the number of regular hikers and ramblers at its peak in the 1930s: they range from 100,000 up to half a million.⁴⁸ Curiously the

Kindred turned its élitist back on the notion of galvanising such potential. Just as the Open-Air movement became inordinately populist, the Kibbo Kift dispensed with hiking, camping and Woodcraft as their *modus operandi*. In 1929, the English Youth Hostels Association was founded and in 1931 the press reported a ‘boom year’ for rambling. In 1932, with almost perverse timing, the Kindred finally threw its whole weight behind Social Credit economic theory and all but abandoned Woodcraft, except for within its dwindling Youth sections, to begin fashioning itself into an urban-based, mass political party. In the same year some 1,600 members of the general public boarded four specially chartered trains on midsummer’s eve and set off to see the sun rise over Chanctonbury Ring. One might view Hargrave as a man who almost subconsciously chose the hardest trail to follow. In 1932 he replied in rather a sarcastic tone to an anxious follower that the movement could indeed receive “all the support we wanted tomorrow” if Social Credit was dropped and Woodcraft restored to its former position, alongside “a whiff of Masonic ritual and Ancient Wisdom.”⁴⁹ However, that was no longer the path, the ‘Key’ to the New Age now lay hidden in the ‘truth’ of the New Economics’.

Bramwell for her part has also differentiated between an ‘Environmental’ and an ‘Ecological’ path which she sees separating, or at least becoming more accentuated, in the inter-war period in Britain. She differentiates between the ‘environmental’ strand, the piece-meal, problem-solving of particular issues, (through pressure-groups, campaigns and “strong doses of Fabian administration”) and the more radical, ‘fundamentalist’, ecological demand for total social revolution.⁵⁰ These models can be developed by attempting to determine which tradition the Kibbo Kift and the Woodcraft

movement belonged to. This can be done by contrasting the philosophy and practice of the Kindred with that of its one-time follower Rolf Gardiner, the Dorset farmer who became a leading figure in the organic farming movement. His departure from the Kibbo Kift, after two years of being a close lieutenant of Hargrave's, and his subsequent criticisms provide an excellent basis for examining the debate between the two wings of Rural Romanticism. According to Gardiner, Hargrave and Mosley were the only "charismatic" leaders "stirring under the damp blanket of Baldwin's England", but it was Hargrave's "inorganic", abstract line of thinking which caused Gardiner to harken to the voice of his other prophet, D.H. Lawrence.⁵¹ In the last instance the Kindred was a symptom of the contradictions of modern 'suburban' thinking.

Lawrence Chubb, President of the National Footpaths Preservation Society, who was invited onto the Advisory Council of the Kibbo Kift, introduced propaganda for access to ancient rights of way, but it should be noted at the outset that the Kindred never sought to create a commune, or establish a 'Back-to-the-Land'-style colony, much to Gardiner's chagrin (although he was not entirely surprised). Gardiner despaired of the 'Liberal' conclusions concerning the redundancy of the English peasantries. He realised that the State would provide no real assistance so any impetus would have to be provided by small pioneering *nuclei* such as the Kindred. However Hargrave regarded such experiments with a surprising amount of suspicion. Their heroic vision was of the Nomad, very much in the style of Hermann Hesse's 'Romantic Wanderer': free, mobile, uncluttered by material ties and in close contact with the wild, living world; in contrast to the Peasant, tied to the land in a cycle of unremitting toil and hardship.

As Hesse wrote in *Wandering*:

Good luck to the farmer! Good luck to the man who owns his place, the man who works it, the faithful, the virtuous! I can love him, I can revere him, I can envy him. But I have wasted half my life trying to live his life.”...“Here the true life of wandering begins, the life I love, wandering without special direction, taking it easy in the sunlight, the life of a vagabond wholly free. I am much more inclined to live from my rucksack, and let my trousers fray as they like.⁵²

Gardiner, in contrast, celebrated the ‘rooted’ Peasant. The lack of a surviving “peasant cultural tradition” in England had led to the widespread realisation on the Romantic wing of the Liberal Party that, as Mandler puts it: “the best feasible outcome was the restoration, not of a peasantry, but of peasant values in the city.”⁵³ It was Charles Masterman, a former proponent of restoring ‘peasant proprietorship’, who admitted in 1909 that with the ever continuing decline of the English yeomen stock and the decline in English rural life, it was now inevitable that it must be “from the suburban and professional people we must more and more demand a supply of men and women of capacity and energy adequate to the work of the world.”⁵⁴ This is something that the Kindred accepted, but Gardiner and the Tory-Organic tradition refused to countenance such an analysis. They looked with envy at the Dutch, German and Belgian peasantries which had begun to prosper again in the late nineteenth century, thus challenging the economic orthodoxy of ever-larger units of production being the most efficient. If the Liberal-Transcendentalist tradition aspired to Hesse’s Wanderer, then the Tory-Organic tendency looked to the forward-thinking, innovative, hardy peasant, as exemplified in Knut Hamsun’s 1917 epic, *Growth of the Soil*. In this Nobel Prize winning book, the Norwegian author charts the life of Isak, the illiterate, fork-bearded ‘barge of a man’, who builds a farmstead for himself in a wild, uncultivated region of northern Norway. With patience,

endeavour and brute strength, Isak hives from the land a prosperous living and raises a family. As Thomas Mann said of the book:

A splendid work, thoroughly apolitical, one in profound contact with all the present yearnings: glorification of the solitary farmer, of rustic self-sufficiency; hatred of the city, industry, commerce; ironic treatment of the State... goodness, health, humanity... doubtless the spirit of the future.⁵⁵

Hamsun was himself a drifter in his own youth (he left Norway and lived in the United States for a time) but decided against the cult of Wandering. As Bramwell notes, the tramp-hero in Hamsun's 1907 work, *The Wanderer*, learns "to take pleasure in humble farm work, to make things work," becoming a practical craftsman.⁵⁶ In *Growth of the Soil*, the nomadic Lapps, who pass by Isak's estate, are portrayed as grasping, cunning, spiteful and worthless. Again, a neat contrast can be found in Hesse's novel *Knulp*. When the cheerful vagabond is suddenly filled with reproach at his 'idle' life, he hears the voice of God in his heart, asking him: "Would you really want to be a gentleman now, or a master craftsman with a wife and children, reading a paper by the fireside? Wouldn't you run away again this minute to sleep in the woods with the foxes and set traps for the birds and catch lizards?"⁵⁷

Hamsun paints a similar picture of *rooted*, rural bliss:

And when March and April came, Inger and he (Isak) would be wild after each other, just like the birds and the beasts in the woods; and when May was come, he would sow his grain and plant potatoes, living and thriving from day to dawn. Work and sleep, loving and dreaming, he was like the first big ox, and that was a wonder to see, big and bright as a king.⁵⁸

In marked opposition, the Utopianism of the Kibbo Kift was essentially 'post-industrial', mankind would be 'liberated' from the daily misery of workplace by being able to wander off into the countryside, pack on back, in order to commune with Nature and seek spiritual release. Self-realisation would come through leisured enjoyment of the countryside, rather than through

labouring on it. The promise of the New Age, as Hargrave interpreted it, lay in the harmonisation of the biological, scientific and spiritual dimensions of life. At first the Kindred proposed only a 'psychological' response to the 'evils' of industrial society: Woodcraft would alleviate the mental and physical decrepitude of modern urban living. However as Hargrave's confidence and ambition grew, economics allowed the Kindred to broaden its goals to a more far-reaching social vision.

The first half of this thesis begins with a study of the various origins of Woodcraft and the cultural and intellectual sources that motivated Hargrave. The second part will discuss the evolution of the Kibbo Kift Kindred until its ultimate transformation into the overtly political, urban-centered non-Woodcraft Green Shirts. In focussing on the Kindred one is also able, as a by-product, to shed light on a welter of social, cultural and political questions and issues that the Kibbo Kift involved itself with. As Springhall notes, Youth Movements like the Kibbo Kift were indeed, "products of their historical environment, shaped by contemporary ideological forces," not simply "picturesque abberations from the social and historical norm."⁵⁹

The Kindred responded to the challenges and problems of their time in a unique fashion. Thus, hopefully, they will provide the historian with a collection of new and fresh perspectives on the evolution of our contemporary society, in all its colour and variety.

Footnotes for Introduction

¹ J. Hargrave, 'Some Facts about Myself and the Green Shirts', in *Ezra Pound's Letters to John Hargrave* (no date), Youth Movement Archive/Kibbo Kift 217 (Hereafter YMA/KK)

² T. Jeal, *Baden-Powell* (London: Hutchinson, 1989), p.189

³ J. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.3

⁴ F. Trentmann, 'Civilisation and its Discontents: English Neo-Romanticism and the Transformation of Anti-Modernism in Twentieth Century Western Culture' in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.29 (1994), p.585

⁵ F. Trentmann, 'Civilisation and its Discontents' p. 613. For an introduction to this line of approach, see: M.J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* (Cambridge University Press, 1981); R. Collis and P. Dodd, eds., *Englishness: Politics and culture 1880-1920* (London: 1986); C. Shaw and M. Chase, eds., *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989)

⁶ Josef Craven, 'Health, Wholeness, Holiness': *Radical Right and Fascist Attitudes to the British Countryside 1918-1939* (University of Birmingham, M. Phil. Thesis, 1993), pp. 10-11

⁷ Father Vincent McNabb, *The Cross and the Plough* 4 (1) (Michaelmas 1937), p.11; cited in J. Craven, 'Health, Wholeness, Holiness', p.37

⁸ H. J. Massingham, *Wisdom of the Field* (London: Collins, 1945), p.189; cited in J. Craven, 'Health, Wholeness, Holiness', p.36

⁹ There have been a number of recent notable exceptions: Derek Edgell's two volume history of the *The Order of Woodcraft Chivalry as a New Age Alternative to the Boy Scouts*, 2 Vols; (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993); and Mark Drakeford's *Social Movements and Their Supporters: The Green Shirts in England*, (London: Macmillan, 1997), which investigates the Kibbo Kift/Green Shirts as a way of understanding the sociological dynamics of political movements.

¹⁰ J. Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society* (London: Croom Helm, 1997); J. Springhall, 'The Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism in Relation to British Youth Movements, 1908-1930' in *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 16 (1971); Brian Morris, 'Ernest Thompson Seton and the Origins of the Woodcraft Movement' in *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol.5 (1970); D. Prynne, 'The Woodcraft Folk and the Labour Movement, 1925-1970' in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 18 (1983); Paul Wilkinson, 'English Youth Movements' in *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol.4 (1969); Paul Wilkinson, *A Study of the English Uniformed Youth Movements 1883-1935* (University of Wales, M.A. thesis 1968). For more recent debates on the Boy Scouts and Baden-Powell, see: A. Warren, 'Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the Scout Movement and citizen Training in Great Britain, 1900-1920', in *English Historical Review*, 101 (1986); A. Summers, 'Scouts, Guides and VADs: a Note in Reply to Allen Warren', in *English Historical Review*, 102 (1987); A. Warren, 'Baden-Powell: a Final Comment', in *English Historical Review*, 102 (1987); J. Springhall, 'Baden-Powell and the Scout Movement Before 1920: Citizen Training or Soldiers of the Future?', in *English Historical Review*, 102 (1987).

¹¹ J. Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p.19

¹² F. Trentmann, 'Civilisation and its Discontents', p.585

¹³ See for example: J. Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside in F. Gloversmith, ed., *Class, culture and Social Change* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1980) pp. 258-280; Ann Holt, 'Hikers and Ramblers: Surviving a Thirties' Fashion' in *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 4 (1987); Helen Walker, 'The Popularisation of the Outdoor Movement, 1900-1940' in *The British Journal of Sports History* Vol. 2 (1985)

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- ¹⁴ J. Finlay, 'John Hargrave , the Green Shirts and Social Credit' in *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 5 (1970); J. Finlay *Social Credit: The English Origins* (Montreal: 1972); M. Rosenthal, *The Character Factory* (London: Collins, 1986); R. H. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement* (Toronto University Press, 1993)
- ¹⁵ H. Cullis, F. Hurl and R. Hazlewood, *Baden Powell's Scouts: An Official History of the Boy Scout Association* (London: 1961), p.55
- ¹⁶ James Joll, *The Anarchists*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co. , 1964), p.11
- ¹⁷ James Webb, *The Occult Establishment* (Illinois: Open Court, 1976; 1991 edn.), p.10
- ¹⁸ Leslie Paul, *Angry Young Man* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), p. 49
- ¹⁹ A. Bramwell, *Ecology in the Twentieth Century. A History*, (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988) p.112. J. Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p.114
- ²⁰ Interview with Roy Hawthorne in Mark Drakeford, *Social Movements and their Supporters*, p. 192
- ²¹ J. Finlay, *John Hargrave, The Green Shirts and Social Credit*, p. 61
- ²² Ibid, p.56
- ²³ M. Rosenthal, *The Character Factory*, p.248
- ²⁴ W. McG. Eager, *Making Men: History of the Boys Clubs and Related Movements in Great Britain*, (London: 1953), cited by Brian Morris in, "Ernest Thompson Seton and the origins of the Woodcraft movement", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 5 (1970), p.193
- ²⁵ 'The Mission of the Tent', in *Camping*, Vol. 5 (5) (August 1910)
- ²⁶ Holbrook Jackson 'All Work and No Play' in *Health and Efficiency*, September 1919.
- ²⁷ For a still useful account of the Sokol movement, see Karel Domorazek, *Dr. Mirolsav Tyrš: the Founder of the Sokol Union* (Prague: Czechoslovak Foreigners' Office, 1920); see also R.W. Seton-Watson: *A History of the Czechs and Slovaks* (London: Hutchinson, 1943). See also John J. MacAloon, *This Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1981)
- ²⁸ A. Bramwell, *Ecology in the Twentieth Century*; James Webb, *The Occult Establishment*; see also Webb, *The Occult Underground*, (Illinois: Open Court, 1974)
- ²⁹ J. Springhall *Youth, Empire and Society*, p.118
- ³⁰ H.R. Gardiner, *England Herself*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), p.32
- ³¹ J. Webb, *The Occult Establishment*, p.13
- ³² Holbrook Jackson, *The Eighteen Nineties: A Review of Art and Ideas at the Close of the Nineteenth Century* (1913; reprint edn; New York: Capricorn Books, 1966), p. 132. I am grateful to Dr. Alex Owen for pointing me in this direction.
- ³³ M. Green, *The Mountain of Truth*, (London and Hanover: Univ. Press of New England, 1986), p. 2; Walter Lacquer, 'Fin de Siecle: Once More With Feeling', in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 31 (1996), p. 16

³⁴ Peter Washington, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon*, (London: Secker and Warburg, 1993), pp. 8-9

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 9

³⁶ J. Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, (London: Duckworth, 1927; reprint edn; London: William Maclellan, 1979), pp.314-5

³⁷ See White Fox, 'One is One: An Epitome Of Magic And Religion' in *The Mark*, (May, 1923), YMA/KK/ 165 (a)

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 157

³⁹ Peter Washington, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon*, p. 9

⁴⁰ Joseph Le Comte, *The Monist*, Vol.1 (1890-1), pp. 334-335; cited in A. Bramwell, *Ecology in the Twentieth Century*, p. 49; see Bramwell also for an interesting discussion of the impact of Haeckel on European ecological awareness, pp. 39-53

⁴¹ A. Bramwell, *Ecology in the Twentieth Century*, p. 52

⁴² J. Webb, *The Occult Underground*, pp.353-4; see also G. Lichtheim, *A Short of History of Socialism*, (London: Fontana, 1975), p.203

⁴³ J. Webb *The Occult Underground*, pp. 355-357

⁴⁴ *Washington Post* (January 1st 1901); cited in W.Lacquer, 'Fin de Siecle: Once More With Feeling', p. 18

⁴⁵ Avner Offer, *Property and Politics 1870-1914*, (Cambridge University Press, 1981), esp. Ch. 20 'Romantic Residues', and Ch. 21 'Back to the Land', pp.328-362

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, pp.337-8

⁴⁷ Peter Mandler, 'Against "Englishness": English Culture and the Limits to Rural Nostalgia, 1850-1940', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (1997), p. 162

⁴⁸ F. Trentmann, 'Civilisation and its Discontents', p.586; J. Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside' p.268

⁴⁹ Letter from J. Hargrave to 'Lavengri' (Vera Chapman), January 18th, 1932; YMA/KK/126 (B)

⁵⁰ See A. Bramwell, *Ecology in the Twentieth Century*, esp. Ch. 6 'Back to the North Land', pp.104-132

⁵¹ H.R. Gardiner, 'DH Lawrence and the Youth Movement's of the 'Twenties', in *Wessex: Letters from Springhead*, No.2, 4th series, (Springhead: Christmas 1959), p.43

⁵² Herman Hesse, *Wandering*, (1920; this edn. trans. By J. Wright; London: Cape, 1972), pp.6, 23

⁵³ Peter Mandler, 'Against "Englishness": English Culture and the Limits to Rural Nostalgia, 1850-1940', p.162

⁵⁴ C.F.G. Masterman, 'The English City', in *England A Nation*, ed. Lucian Oldershaw (1904), pp. 64-66, and Masterman, *The Condition of England*, (1909), pp. 82-83; cited in Peter Mandler, 'Against "Englishness": English Culture and the Limits to Rural Nostalgia, 1850-1940', p.163

⁵⁵ T. Mann, *Diaries, 1918-1939*, (ed. H.Keston; London: 1983), see pp.42-46; cited in A. Bramwell, *Ecology in the Twentieth Century*, p.150-1

⁵⁶ A. Bramwell, *Ecology in the Twentieth Century*, p.152

⁵⁷ H. Hesse, *Knulp*, (1915; this edn. trans. By R. Manheim; London: Cape, 1972), p.113

⁵⁸ Knut Hamsun, *Growth of the Soil*, (1917; this edn. trans. By W. Worster; London: Souvenir Press, 1995), pp.384-5

⁵⁹ J. Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p.19

CHAPTER ONE: THE COMING OF WOODCRAFT

1. 'Woodcraft and the Industrial Age'

One of the main differences between the Woodcrafters of the Edwardian era and 1920s and the peak years of popular hiking in the 1930s was the conscious realisation by the Woodcrafters that they formed part of the continuation of an historical cultural tradition. In the 1930s, the younger generation of Open-Air enthusiasts often failed to appreciate this despite the barrage of rural literature from publishers such as Batsford, who were constantly evoking the spirit of William Cobbett, Richard Jeffries and W.H. Hudson, linking it to the contemporary 'craze'. Hiking magazines also sought to educate their readership as to their 'Rambling' forefathers, the majority of whom preferred their leisure time to be apolitical and were not overly concerned as to the politics of the old Liberal 'Land' agenda from some thirty to forty years previously. There was a discernible mood of 'hiking for hiking's sake.'¹ This is not to suggest that one should play down the importance of heightened environmentalist concerns over rights of access and urban development but they can be exaggerated. The 1930's 'battles' over land access between the gamekeepers and police and the 'free-born' English Rambler only affected a small part of the English countryside being chiefly concerned with the private grouse moors on a handful of northern estates. There was little duplication of the 1930's 'mass trespasses' on Kinder Scout and Winnat's Pass in southern England.

As Ann Holt says of Eileen Golding, a typical weekend Open-Air enthusiast working as a secretary in Croydon, she saw her hiking as "being part

of a fashion rather than part of a movement.”² As one Woodcrafter acknowledged in 1929, most people were still preferring to remain unorganised, not wishing to join any formal organisation, but merely wanting just to “get on with it.” This was put down to an innate national fear of ‘organisation’.³ Even in 1911 the Amateur Camping Club had complained of independent campers neglecting to join this representative body, yet still receiving all the benefits the Club had wrought.⁴ In contrast, the Woodcrafters were a highly organised movement with a defined social ideal. While stressing their modernity, they acknowledged their cultural debt to the Edwardian Open-Air tradition, with the most obvious point of contact, after the rupture of 1914-1918, being Robert Baden-Powell’s Boy Scout movement.

In 1908 one of the most influential children’s books to be published in the English language appeared. Instantly appealing to boys in the main, its ‘magic’ was soon to be felt throughout Britain, to the furthest shores of the Empire and the world beyond. Its rapid success far exceeded the expectations of its author, Robert Baden-Powell. *Scouting For Boys* changed forever the face of boyhood and adolescence, re-defining and mythologising them in equal measure. Out of its pages sprang the Boy Scout movement, the most popular youth organisation of the modern age.⁵

Scouting For Boys and the subsequent Boy Scout Association, gave the male child a new model to aspire to: the so-called ‘Open-Air Boy’, who quickly became one of the enduring icons of the Edwardian period. The fresh-faced, keen-eyed lad, quick-witted yet dextrous, adventurous yet responsible, gentlemanly and chivalrous, lived his life among the pages of the myriad of adventure stories and boys’ magazines of the age.

The Open-Air Boy stood in the footprints of those other literary heroes that he sought to emulate, the gallant sportsmen, Imperial adventurers, 'Big Game' hunters, hardy soldiers and resourceful sailors. The Open-Air Boy was expected to seek out the qualities of these exemplars so that Youth became a personification of vital, positive energy and outdoor physicality.⁶

The Open-Air Boy would invariably find strength from contact with the natural world. A life lived as far as possible out of doors was considered more healthy and beneficial, strenuous activity built both a robust body and 'sound' character. Such an evocation was by no means an Edwardian invention. The ideal of the Open-Air life was following hard on the heels of a tradition reaching back to the European Romantic poets and philosophers who had rebelled against the early disfiguration of the natural world by the nascent Industrial Revolution. From Rousseau, Schiller and Ruskin, to Carpenter and Morris, there had always been vociferous anti-industrial sentiments in Western society. This strand usually incorporated corresponding anti-urban, pro-rural and agrarian arguments, as well as the rejection of the philosophical superstructure underpinning modern industrial societies.⁷

The scope of this tradition is wide and varied surfacing in a whole range of ideologies and movements that span the political spectrum. From revolutionaries, reformists and reactionaries of all political colourings, the evocation of an idealised landscape (especially of the 'Motherland') has been a powerful weapon for those who would wish to 'soften', retard, roll back or even supersede industrialism. Critiques of industrial society usually comprised any number of the following arguments: that, contrary to the evidence of social progression, industrialisation benefited only a tiny minority in society, while

reducing the vast majority to the status of 'wage slave' and 'factory hand'; that the industrialised society has in effect sold its soul for the sake of 'Mammon' and in return has received unprecedented levels of greed, selfishness, criminality and an overall decline in moral standards; that communities have been weakened thus threatening the overall organic unity of the Nation due to class antagonism and economic dislocation; that over-crowded urban centres and dirty workplaces were leading to a degeneration of the racial stock; that the laws of Free Trade were further undermining racial health due to immigration and emigration; and finally that the natural, as well as cultivated landscape, essential as the repository of a Nation's physical and spiritual sustenance, was being destroyed due to the changing demands on agriculture and industry's incessant demand for raw materials.⁸

Sentiments of this nature had strengthened and were becoming more common in Western Europe, especially in Germany, as the end of the nineteenth century approached. Britain's Back-to-the-Land movement gathered momentum in the 1880s and 1890s: a whole plethora of ideas, attitudes and activities manifested themselves reinforcing this anti-industrial tradition. Back-to-the-Land could be interpreted in a number of different ways. First it could mean a literal attempt at physically re-rooting oneself back on the soil. The famous Liberal Land Reform slogan of 'Three Acres and a Cow' evoked a number of often ill-prepared fundamentalist communes and farm colony initiatives from the 1880s onwards, such as Rev. Herbert Mills' Home Colonisation Society, founded in 1892, which ended in acrimonious relations between Mills and his rebellious 'colonists' at Starnthwaite Farm in the Lake District.⁹ The Clousden Hill Communist and Co-operative Colony was a more successful venture

inspired directly by the ideas of the Russian anarchist Prince Peter Kropotkin. It managed to generate a prosperous market garden business selling produce to the mining districts around Newcastle-upon-Tyne.¹⁰ Yet, as Joseph Fels (an American soap magnate and philanthropist who came to Britain and campaigned for land reform) saw, peasant viability could never be assured in a country lacking a co-ordinated national policy, unlike the examples of Denmark, Holland, Germany and France. He resigned himself to the fact that: "Everyone knows that 'Back-to-the-Land' is impossible so long as the fundamental land monopoly continues, because there is no land available for use except under conditions which make its use unprofitable. The long struggle to open the gate of the industrial prisons has made this abundantly clear."¹¹

The inter-war Tory-Organic position can admittedly be seen as a highly critical yet fundamentally sympathetic response to these attempts at re-establishing the English peasantry.

'Back-to-the-Land' could also necessitate a cultural rather than economic involvement with the landscape, seeking 'transcendental' inspiration from the soil. This can be seen, for example, in the fashion for rural handicrafts as seen in the Arts & Crafts movement: from William Morris, Walter Crane, Charles Ashbee, the Art Workers' Guild and the Guild of Handicraft in the Cotswolds, to the workshop of Ernest Barnsley and the Gimson brothers, also in Gloucestershire and to Eric Gill's various successive artistic communities in Sussex, the Welsh Mountains and High Wycombe. It can also be seen in the so-called 'Folk Revival' which all came into vogue at the end of the nineteenth century and saw an insatiable appetite for the collecting and annotating of the rural tradition of ballads, songs, music and dance as an authentic expression of

English national music. The Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould was just such a collector. His example was followed by equally committed enthusiasts, the most famous being Cecil Sharp who founded the English Folk Dance in 1911 with, among others, Ralph Vaughan Williams on the committee. Sharp hoped the wholesome and supposedly ‘innocent’ nature of folk song and dance would oust the coarseness of the urban music-hall tradition and, as Marsh notes, end the “contamination of manufactured music, and (so) return England, musically at least, to its pre-industrial condition.”¹²

Back-to-the-Land could also relate to growing attempts to preserve and protect the landscape via conservation and environmental organisations. For example the National Trust, founded in 1895, was following in the footsteps of the Commons Preservation Society, established in 1865, and the National Footpaths Preservation Society of 1884. Back-to-the-Land could also imply the enjoyment and celebration of Open-Air leisure through activities such as walking, tramping, camping and caravanning and, indeed, Woodcraft. This last manifestation of Back-to-the-Land endeavours provided the essential backbone to the Liberal-Transcendentalist tradition which celebrated peasant culture, yet fundamentally saw no realistic return to a pre-industrial peasant society: rather, let rural values flood the modern world with light, health and tranquillity.

This Back-to-the-Land impulse was also augmented by the efforts of a determined minority of men and women who aimed to return to the so-called ‘Simple Life’. Dubbed ‘Cranks’ and ‘Faddists’, they formed part of an extensive ‘underground’ culture that has endured to the present day. Food reformers and vegetarians, dress reformers and naturists, pagans and pantheists, ‘Illuminates’ and occultists, ‘physical culturists’ and sexual liberators, homeopaths and anti-

vivisectionists often blended, as has been noted, with the fringes of the political worlds of *fin-de-siecle* and pre-war Liberalism, Socialism, Marxism and Anarchism, before finding another available home with the Radical Right and Fascists in the inter-war period.

John Hargrave was to deny that the Kibbo Kift, coming as it did in the 1920s, was part of any fundamentalist Edwardian Back-to-the-Land tradition. He questioned the viability of a peasant-based economy and attacked 'neo-Ludditism' as a symptom of the so-called modern-day "work complex."¹³ However the Kibbo Kift did incorporate various aspects of the Back-to-the-Land critique of industrialism and urbanisation, as well as promoting the Land's important social, cultural and spiritual role.

The growth of the Back-to-the-Land and Simple Life movements in the nineteenth century have been charted brilliantly by Jan Marsh. She claims however that the growth of this tradition was stunted and retarded by the Great War and that post-1914, "the disregard of the whole cluster of back-to-nature and Simple Life ideas was almost total."¹⁴ However a love of nature and the enjoyment of the Open-Air life had re-asserted itself by the 1930s, with the advent of hiking and motor touring in the countryside. The rural theme in literature also continued to rise in popularity, extending to new forms of media such as the wireless and cinema, etc. Artists such as Eric Gill continued to be inspired by rural and peasant themes. Yet Marsh is correct in asserting that the 'Cranks' were extremely isolated, as evidenced by the failure of Woodcraft to ignite a British population apparently more than ever before enamoured of the countryside.

Indeed, the Great War did a great deal to clear out the fads and fantasies from much of British politics. War had necessitated a movement away from 'Illuminated' fringe politics. Similarly the discipline of government for the Labour Party in 1923 also necessitated an aura of respectability and responsibility: dreams of an 'Earthly Paradise' had to be put on one side. What is more, the singularly 'un-Illuminated', technological and materialist nature of the Soviet Union's own Earthly Paradise, as well as the later display of 'Irrationalism' and mysticism by Fascism and National Socialism, meant that the Left had, by and large, to pick up the banners of Reason, Rationality and Pragmatism.¹⁵

However, as has been noted, interest in 'Illuminated' knowledge and the Occult had not disappeared. For many of a mystical persuasion, the war could be seen as the final bankruptcy of western European civilisation. The shock of the war, both for its participants and for the respective societies for whom the war was fought, stimulated in the words of James Webb, "a flight from Reason". This can be seen for example in the renewed interest for Spiritualism and so-called 'Spirit photography' in the wake of the unprecedented levels of human carnage and in the collectively experienced 'illusions' such as the 'Angels' at Mons or Russian armies seeing "fiery crosses" in the skies above them.¹⁶ It should also be noted that it was considered no accident that Our Lady appeared in a vision to the Spanish children at Fatima in the earth-shattering year of 1917.

In order to understand the origins of the Woodcraft movement and the Edwardian advocacy of the Open-Air life in more depth it is necessary to pay attention to changing attitudes concerning man's relationship with the physical world around him and, in particular, to his enjoyment of the landscape through

physical activity. Indeed the Woodcraft movement can be seen as part of a peripatetic tradition that by the 1920s was already over a century old.

The Kibbo Kift leant heavily on Romantic Transcendental attitudes to the countryside that had surfaced in the early nineteenth century. One of the Romantic methods used to ‘commune’ with the natural world was by harnessing the physical exertion of strenuous walking. To the Romantic frame of mind the very process of walking, especially in the countryside, restored, according to Anna Wallace, “the natural proportions of our perceptions, reconnecting us with both the physical world and the moral order inherent in it.”¹⁷

The walker’s destination was secondary, as suggested by the increasing usage of the words ‘wanderer’ and ‘wandering’. The wanderer would become better attuned to his own sense of self, his thoughts and emotions would become better clarified, walking would ‘give voice’ to his ‘inner feeling’. As the Ancients put it, “*solvitur ambulando*”: if you want to clear your head and concentrate the mind, go for a long walk.¹⁸ Significantly, wandering was to be a solitary, as opposed to collective, activity.

Such ideas were developed by the poets Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Coleridge and Byron but probably the most influential exposition on the aesthetics of walking came from Jean-Jacques Rousseau with his *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*. To Rousseau walking was not solely an aid to mental exercise but a release from the constant ‘babbling’ of the mind.

This was a great change from the feudal and post-feudal suspicion of ‘foot-travel’. The very term ‘wandering’ implied a disregard of both the destination and set boundaries that could be applied to vagrants and criminals. In contrast a ‘pedestrian’ signified a person of lowly rank, at best a pilgrim or

journeyman. The Grand Tour of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries helped to contribute to the gradual shift in attitudes that elevated the concept of walking. To begin with, travel generally was no longer seen as such a dangerous and foolhardy pursuit; it was less expensive, less arduous and, with the coming of the Enlightenment, it could be seen as a positive experience. Enthusiasm for the Grand Tour peaked with the publication of perhaps the first modern tourist guide, Nugent's famous book of 1778, *The Grand Tour*, which provided the reader with four volumes of routes, time-tables, prices and maps enabling the Englishman to get the most from his continental tour. Nugent's book is itself evidence of the easier, improved means of travel such as safer Channel crossings and the construction of new turnpike roads on the Continent.¹⁹

Yet, even in the eighteenth century, the 'Grand Tourist' would never have deigned to walk. The 1788 guide *Tour Through Switzerland* did not recommend 'pedestrianism' (except where there was no other choice).²⁰ Even when Edward Gibbon was faced with the prospect of a seven hour crossing over the Alps, he preferred the precarious mode of being carried by porters in a sedan chair (who proceeded to terrify Gibbon by running down the treacherous icy slopes).²¹

The increase in travel and tourism, admittedly experienced by a small élite of European society, helped to undermine medieval, negative connotations but did not obliterate them. The coming of the railway in the nineteenth century promised that travel would soon become a universal experience and an acceptable recreation in itself, rather than being merely a way of traversing between two points in the shortest time.

Paradoxically the transport revolution led to a re-assessment of the practice of walking. The fact that alternative methods of transport were becoming increasingly available meant that the social stigma of walking was diminished. Walking was just one of a number of alternatives and, what is more, it came to be seen as a 'positive choice'. The 'voluntary' aspect of walking made it more appealing as a suitable leisure activity; the 1818 edition of Ebel's guide to Switzerland was to now feature walking tours.²²

Ironically the enclosures, the process of closing off common land, denying ancient rights of way and public access in the bid to revolutionise agriculture, also contributed to this change in attitudes²³. Despite the fact that countless paths disappeared under the plough or newly planted hedgerow, many others were being acknowledged for the first time as public rights of way, thanks to the rise in cartography which sought to legally formalise these dramatic changes in land ownership. The enclosures also led to a 'rationalisation' of the local topography, through the straightening of roads for example and the building of new highways between towns and villages, which helped to break down the sense of geographic isolation that had shrouded rural areas with their 'secret' paths and green lanes. Thus another disincentive for the walking tour, the lack of reliable information from which one could orientate oneself, no longer posed such an insurmountable problem.²⁴ Guide books specifically for walkers began to appear in English at the end of the eighteenth century. The Reverend Richard Warner's *A Walk Through Wales* first appeared in 1798, its success leading to a follow up second volume in 1799. Of course the very fact that many ancient rights of way were being curtailed by the landlords also stirred the first voices of protest from notables such as William

Wordsworth, himself a pioneer in the elevation of walking into an ideology through his vigorous excursions in the Lake District. Wordsworth was highly critical of the Kendal to Windermere railway but it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the first organised pressure groups and walking associations appeared to challenge the landlords.²⁵

Wordsworth's aesthetic aspired to the gentle ruggedness of the Lake District. He celebrated the essential wildness of the region, the uncultivated and natural landscape. The 'high places' of the British Isles, solitary and desolate, were to be a continuing source of inspiration for writers, poets and artists, but continental Europe could offer an even more dramatic arena in which the Romantic impulse could soar: the Alps.

The early nineteenth century was to see an enormous *volte face* which overturned centuries of fear and distrust of Europe's snowy wilderness. The first recorded ascent of an Alpine peak was Petrarch's climb of Mount Ventoux in 1336. Few cared to follow his example but a number of monastic orders, seeking solitude up in the mountains away from the world of the flesh, established Alpine retreats, such as those at Chartreuse. The medieval religious impulse gave way to scientific enquiry, with a sprinkling of botanists and geologists making trips up into the region. This trend was to increase in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1741 an expedition led by two Englishmen, William Windham and Richard Pococke, set off to observe the glacier at Chamonix. In 1760 Horace Benedict de Saussure made a trip, again to Chamonix and Mont Blanc, which was to herald a thirty year exploration of the area by the Frenchman. He himself was offered a prize for the conquest of Mt. Blanc in 1786, but it was to be claimed by two local men before he made the ascent

himself in 1787, along with sixteen porters laden down with scientific apparatus and hampers of wine.²⁶

Yet Saussure's enthusiasm, taking Edward Gibbon's Alpine adventure as an example, would have horrified most of his contemporaries. Alpine travel was to be dreaded rather than celebrated. For those undertaking the Grand Tour, the climactic destination was usually Italy, which unfortunately necessitated an Alpine crossing in preference to a notorious sea-route between Marseilles and Naples. Until Napoleon's opening of the Mt. Cenis and Simplon passes, which gave access to wheeled traffic, the trip involved the use of a mule or, as in the case of Gibbon, a sedan chair. The trip was often undertaken at night, thus compounding the fear. As Hindley put it: "Travellers faced the prospect of an Alpine journey with trepidation and the notion of going out of one's way to enjoy these wild and desolate places was positively eccentric."²⁷

Even the poet Thomas Gray, whose 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard' was, as Hindley notes, one of the original Romantic statements regarding man's relationship with the natural world, maintained that the Alps carried the "permission mountains have of being frightful" rather too far.²⁸

Gray made a trip across the Alps in 1739 accompanied by his friend Horace Walpole. The misery of the latter was compounded by the fact that his pet spaniel was snatched by a wolf *en route* and killed.²⁹ For his part, Goethe maintained a cool, rational, scientific outlook on his crossing, concentrating his mind on the varieties of flora and fauna, the weather, rock formations and the effect that travel-induced constipation was having on his health.³⁰ At best, mountains were treated with wary respect in travelogues. However in the 1790s Wordsworth, as a Cambridge student, clandestinely planned an epic walking

tour of Continental Europe. Switzerland was chosen, not because it was a gateway to Italy, but purely for the mountains' own sake, and an Alpine walking holiday was indeed enjoyed by Wordsworth and his companions. For Wordsworth and his fellow Romantic poets, the mountains gave a sense of transcendental release. If the Himalayas were the holiest site for the Hindu poets, full of awe-inspiring wonder and mystery, so the Alps could fulfil the same purpose for the European man. Cold, clear, crystal blue winter skies, the magical serenity of the snow and glaciers, the silence of the mountains, the dripping pine forests, prompted the hauling of artist's easels, canvasses and paints up onto the vantage points, where they took their place alongside various types of meteorological and geological equipment.³¹

The coming of the railways, the growing fashionability of the country, as well as the later medical recommendation of mountain air in the treatment of pulmonary and respiratory illnesses, lead to the rapid popularisation of Switzerland by the middle-classes, much to the horror of Wordsworth. The mountains became a particular favourite of the British, especially when some branches of medical opinion revised their view as to the benefits of the Mediterranean climate. From the 1850s up to the Great War wave upon wave of genteel invalids and pale-faced youths mounted a bath-chair invasion of Switzerland. Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* bore witness to the success of the famous Swiss sanatoria.³²

The open-air treatment of invalids gave rise to the promotion of physical exercise in the mountains for the more able-bodied. The mountains came to be associated with rude health and robust vitality. Once more it was the British who led the way in this field too, 'inventing' mountaineering as a sport in the 1850s.

Curiously, the British Alpine Club was founded six years before its Swiss equivalent, in 1856. Over the next twenty years other 'winter sports' became increasingly fashionable with the British middle classes, such as tobogganing, skating and skiing. The so-called Golden Age of mountaineering, heralded by the creation of the Alpine Club, was to last until 1865 when its first major sporting accident claimed the lives of four mountaineers and tarnished, albeit temporarily, its image. It was to be Leslie Stephen, the eminent Victorian man of letters, as well as a keen rower, mountaineer and walker, who was to provide much of the impetus in the re-kindling of interest in climbing and "changing the image of it from being a reckless, dangerous sport into a serious and noble pursuit."³³ Stephen was to be elected President of the Alpine Club in 1865 and was to enjoy a total of twenty-five seasons in the mountains.

Not a little embarrassed by the Romantic yearnings these natural wonders stirred within him, Stephen's biographer notes the rather self-conscious style Stephen adopted when writing about the mountains. He retreated into an almost jovial, semi-serious style, fearing his Victorian audience's reaction to prose that could be construed as a little "too purple."³⁴

It was primarily English upper middle-class professionals who formed the core of climbers and mountaineers in the mid nineteenth century, that scaled over forty major Alpine peaks. The relatively slow growth of the exclusive Alpine Club (rising from 323 in 1870 to 700 in 1914) masks the growing popularity of the sport. Stephen's celebrated compilation of essays in 1870 extolling the Alps, *The Playground of Europe*, bemoaned the growing intrusion of mass 'tourism' (as opposed to 'travel') into the region. The once peaceful

valleys were now resounding to such vulgarities as the crash of cannon fire for the benefit of tourists eager to experience a valley's echo effect.

Stephen was concerned lest the rising popularity of the Alps would trivialise and de-base their emotive power. Not only that, but the increasing popular accessibility of the slopes was diluting the challenge the mountain once posed to man's strength and will.

Stephen combined a neo-Romantic attitude to the Alps with the contemporary cult of 'athleticism' and 'masculinity' that was beginning to play such a prominent role in Victorian society. Physical outdoor games and sports were increasingly being held up as vital components in the building of individual and collective health and character. Attitudes were changing: in matters of health the outdoors was no longer regarded as being fundamentally detrimental to one's constitution. The human body in fact could be toughened and strengthened by a certain amount of exposure to the natural elements and various climates. In the treatment of tuberculosis, one of Victorian Britain's premier diseases, a patient at the start of the century could have expected to endure a regime that included a tightly sealed bedroom at home and a restricted diet, but within fifty years (resources permitting) they would have been transferred to the sea-fronts at Cannes, San Remo or Menton where "their bath chairs monopolised the Promenade du Midi by day, and by night their premature retirement imported a hospital hush to the atmosphere."³⁵ By the close of the century the popularity of mountain resorts was well established. For those less affluent, home-grown sanatoria promised healthy local conditions, where the climate was bright but 'breezy' and the proximity of pinewoods and bracing sea-air, were also considered especially beneficial.³⁶

In an increasingly urbanised and industrial society the outdoors was seen as a safeguard of health. Concern focussed on the physical health of the ordinary working masses, as well as the mental health of their 'superiors'. Modern life was increasingly being recognised as competitive, stressful and confusing. Furthermore, many mental health problems were increasingly being identified as having a physiological cause. Depression, ennui and "mental alienation" were seen by Benjamin Brodie, President of the Royal Society in 1854, as "generally the result of some wrong condition of the body."³⁷ The athletic Leslie Stephen agreed: "no man would deny that a thoroughly healthy state of body is the normal and most essential condition of athletic excellence. And just the same may be said of spiritual and intellectual health."³⁸

Thus the maxim *mens sana in corpore sano* came to be emblazoned on the walls of gymnasia, clubrooms, changing rooms and dormitories across Britain and the Empire.³⁹ Sport no longer merely referred to traditional field sports but came to include a new generation of competitive, regulated team-sports such as football, hockey, rugby football and rowing that were born in the Victorian public schools of the mid nineteenth century. These schools were in business to supply healthy boys that could be relied on to play their part in the 'Great Game' of Britain's imperial adventure. Health was required both in body and mind with 'character building' being an essential component of the new games agenda. 'Character building' to some schoolmasters was considered to be more important than raising intellect. The rules of the game of Life were to be learned on the rugger pitch rather than in the library. *Punch* magazine ran a cartoon in 1889 depicting a headmaster addressing a new boy: "Of course you needn't *work*, Fitzmilksope: but *play* you must and shall." Charles Kingsley

commented thus: "Through sport boys acquire virtues which no books can give them; not merely daring and endurance, but better still, temper, self-restraint, fairness, honour, unenvious approbation of another's success, and all that 'give and take' of life which stands a man in good stead when he goes forth into the world, and without which, indeed, his success is always maimed and partial."⁴⁰

The building of character meant an attention to duty, loyalty, bravery, self-control, a certain degree of stoicism, but above all 'manliness'. The historian Holt tells us, first, what 'manliness' did *not* mean:

Manliness was emphatically not to be confused with sexuality; manliness was to be an antidote to the precocious development of adult male sexuality by providing a new moral and physical definition of what masculinity was. True manliness was held to reside in the harmonious growth of physique and character side by side. A 'manly' boy was strong of body and pure of heart.⁴¹

This promotion of manliness went hand-in hand with the late-Victorian re-assertion of masculinity, neatly exemplified by the downfall of Oscar Wilde in 1895. The counter-posing of masculinity with its opposite, homosexuality (defined as a criminal offence ten years earlier) led to the epic court-room battle between the archetypal sporting gentleman and 'father' of modern boxing, the Marquis of Queensbury and the celebrated *fin-de-siècle* aesthete and 'Uranian' complete with green carnation, who despised any form of athleticism. The public school ethos brought many approving nods in a culture increasingly influenced by Charles Darwin, or at least the distortions of Darwinism by his many disciples. Competitive sports had a vital role to play in society if one were to subscribe to the view that only the strongest in nature will survive. The primitive living conditions and rigours of public school life were designed to facilitate a 'toughening up' of the boy. The watchword was 'Spartan'. Foreign observers were impressed. The French, still smarting after their humiliation at

the hands of the Prussians in 1870, saw in the public school system a method of restoring national pride. They saw their own secondary schools as being too focussed on academic ability, “producing narrow-chested, round shouldered aesthetes,” according to Baron Pierre de Courbetin.⁴² Indeed the French were also in awe of the German *Turnvereine*, the gymnastic societies of Father Jahn which, originating in the early nineteenth century, were later to be embraced by the founders of the modern unified German state.

Athleticism not only built strong bodies and consequently, strong characters, but was also good for the ‘soul’. As has been discussed, the Romantic poets had been the first to explore the ‘transcendental’ nature of walking and rambling. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Hazlitt and De Quincey all sought inspiration from contact with the natural world, provided by long, hard strenuous walking. De Quincey speculated, in a rather optimistic vein, that Wordsworth, “must have traversed a distance of 175,000 to 180,000 English miles... to which he was indebted for a life of unclouded happiness, and we, for much that is excellent in his writings.”⁴³

On one particular occasion, in 1794, Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, were said to have traversed some thirty-three miles in a single day.⁴⁴ This trend was to continue into the nineteenth century with the poet George Meredith, a prominent walker in the Box Hill area of Surrey, often completing some thirty miles a day. Leslie Stephen recalled with pride in later years the occasion when he walked from Cambridge to London in twelve hours in order to attend a dinner at the Alpine Club.⁴⁵

The pain that inevitably ensued from such an undertaking gives a psychological insight into their intense thirst for the re-vitalising spirit of nature.

Trentmann has called this a state of “open-air drunkenness which seeks to mentally and morally rejuvenate the practitioner... Its purifying energy would quell the ‘rebellious superficialities of the mind’ and leave behind a refreshed, regenerated individual.”⁴⁶

Mountaineering, too, was seen as providing the same ‘transcendental’ state of consciousness through its own application of vigorous athleticism. Stephen, eager to claim spiritual communion with nature whilst on a climb, objected to social chatter, so as to “bathe his mind in the healing springs of Alpine silence.”⁴⁷ Stephen was also of the opinion that such activities were ideal for his kind: intellectuals and educated free-thinkers. The mountains allowed the upper-middle and professional classes to transcend the ordinary domain of everyday experience and to enjoy the excitement experienced by ‘men of action’ such as soldiers and sailors. It also provided a release from the nervous strain of intellectual activity. Stephen was prolific scholar and essayist and the editing of the *Dictionary of National Biography* was to bring about his final physical collapse, but the Alps were seen as a vital source of inspiration and relaxation. A fellow Alpine enthusiast, John Tyndall, wrote of a climb up Mount Blanc in 1860: “To some, such bodily exertion is irksome, to some, painful in the extreme, while to others it imparts the increased flow of life and energy which is the source of pleasure fully appreciated by all who... could row in a boat on which is depicted the motto, *Labor ipse Voluptas*.”⁴⁸

Stephen’s biographer Annan, also asserted that such activities were appropriate for the intellectual at odds with the conventional world: “Remove him from civilised society and plant him in the silence of the snows and his neuroses fall from his back like Christian’s burden...”⁴⁹

Lowerson too notes how, “Alpine mountaineering fitted the needs of relatively wealthy bachelors, lawyers, clergy and dons...which allowed a brief escape from their highly structured and eminently respectable home-based lives.”⁵⁰ Stephen also acknowledged the attraction the mountains held for the disgruntled rebel, as in the example of John Ruskin. The high priest of anti-industrialism was a keen Alpine enthusiast (as much for aesthetics as his health, which had been damaged by tuberculosis) but was also a vehement detractor of the mountaineers who were ‘despoiling’ the region:

Mr. Ruskin would explain better than anyone why the love of the sublimest scenery should be associated with a profound conviction that all things are out of joint, and that society can only be regenerated by rejecting all the achievements on which the ordinary optimist plumes himself. After all, it is not surprising that those who are most sick of man as he is, should love the regions where man seems smallest.⁵¹

Indeed, as John Pemble suggests, Ruskin’s love of the Alps owed much to his Biblical scholarship, with the stern, cold mountain being seen very much in Old Testament terms as providing a closeness to God and a rejection of the soft, warm, ‘feminised’ life of sinful civilisation.⁵²

The general decline in organised religion and the slow retreat of Christian orthodoxy in the face of scientific discoveries, as well as new Biblical criticism, also allowed the natural world to provide more of a spiritual focus for an increasingly educated and agnostic populace. ‘Nature-worship’ proved to be both an attractive supplement and alternative to Church dogma. Again, Leslie Stephen provides a good example, with his Anglican faith crumbling as he underwent preparations for Holy Orders. Stephen, while denying he was a pantheist, nevertheless sought and found spiritual solace in the natural world.

The links between communities and their churches were further loosened by the fundamental demographic changes that were being experienced in the

nineteenth century, with ever increasing numbers of people seeking work in the expanding urban centres. The churches were to fight back: the Church of England, for example, was aware of the increasing popularity of the Nonconformist tradition among the working classes, as well as the drift of High Anglicans to Rome and set out to tap into the new mood of athleticism and increasingly into 'nature-worship'. The mid-nineteenth century was the age of the 'boxing Anglican clergyman', to be found in the clubrooms and gyms in the poorer areas of every major industrial town, as well as in the public schools. Charles Dickens satirised the fellow in his character, the Reverend Septimus Crisparkle, whose "radiant features teamed with innocence, and soft-hearted benevolence beamed from his boxing gloves."⁵³ As shall be discussed later, the future role taken up by the Churches in building the Edwardian youth movements (for example, the Y.M.C.A., the Boys' Brigade and the Church Lads Brigade) was a further indication of their adoption of the new attitudes to physical culture. As a verse from the hymn, 'Lord of the Clean and the Strong', published in *C.B.Fry's Magazine* in 1904, put it: "Aye for the joy – the glory, the passionate burst of life, / The pride and the strength and the power that / Thrills to the tramp of strife, / Aye, for the leap of the pulses / For the spring where the muscles rise, / For the clean red mouth, cold temples, and the wide, glad, vivid eyes."⁵⁴

2. The Open-Air Life and the Edwardian Imagination

Leslie Stephen was not only a pioneer in Alpine mountaineering but also established, along with Frederick Pollock (the lawyer and editor of *The Saturday Review*) and Croom Robertson (Professor of Philosophy at University College,

London), one of the most celebrated of the Victorian walking clubs in England: the Order of the Sunday Tramps. The Sabbatarian tradition was flagrantly disregarded in favour of twenty to twenty-five mile long walks organised meticulously by Stephen himself, who would send out cryptic postcards regarding the *rendez-vous* to fellow 'Tramps'. Meetings on alternate Sundays, over a period of fifteen years, between 1880 and 1895, they completed some 252 walks, mostly in the Home Counties.¹

As has been seen, the groups of academics, professionals and *literati* who were tramping the paths of the South and the Home Counties, were soon to be joined by members of newly organised conservation bodies, as well as more 'proletarian' bands of walkers from the Clarion Clubs, Holiday Associations and the Polytechnics, primarily based in the Midlands and North of England and all equally determined to enjoy the Open-Air life as much as the next man. The once solitary Romantic pursuit of the wanderer was now taking on a collective nature.

The 1890s also saw another manifestation of the Open-Air leisure craze: cycling which rapidly became extremely popular not only in Britain but in France and later Italy. The railway had aided the public's ability to gain wider access to the countryside from the 1860s onwards but a cheaper alternative method of transport was the bicycle. Of course, used in conjunction with the railway, the cyclist could roam at will in blissful independence over considerable distances. The Cyclists Touring Club (C.T.C.) had been founded in 1878 in order to popularise cycling holidays, but membership was to mushroom in the 1890s rising from 3,356 in 1880 to 60,449 in 1900. Although that was the

peak year and membership was to dip over the next fourteen years, cycling had firmly established itself as a national pan-class institution.²

However, cycling in the 1880s and 1890s came to be associated primarily with the lower middle-class and the upper working classes: the office-bound clerk as well as the manual labourer was able to use his bicycle to travel to work and to get some valuable exercise. The role of the bicycle in the building of the socialist Clarion Clubs should not obscure the fact that cycling did enjoy genuine cross-class appeal. It could boast the patronage of many worthies including A.J. Balfour and M.R. James (the Provost of King's College, Cambridge) who, on account of his abhorrence of rowing, specialised in long-distance continental cycling tours, as well as more frequent trips around East Anglia in order to study Church architecture.³

Cycling's adherents delighted in promoting its clean, Open-Air image that caught the spirit of the times so well: advertisements liked to depict the bicycle as the means of escape for men and, indeed, women, away from the congested and smoky cities and towns. As one contributor to *The Clerk* in 1890 put it:

Nothing is more delightful than, after a week's hard grind in the office and among the dry ledgers, day books, etc; to don your special garments, mount your glittering wheel, and then take away to the green lanes, leafy woods and rippling brooks of the sweet country, there to mix your blood with sunshine, and to take the wind into your pulses.⁴

Moreover, if one were to derive such pleasure and spiritual benefit from a day's outing in the countryside, how much more profitable *not* to have to return home at dusk, but rather to be able to stay out of doors all night in either a tent or caravan? The poet Rupert Brooke retired to the New Forest for a period in 1908 and, on his return, declared that he felt "for the first time in my life a

free man... behaving naturally.”⁵ The satirist H.H. Munro (‘Saki’) also yearned for a more ‘natural’ life and, according to John Carey, had once planned to go and farm out in Siberia. Instead he found an outlet in paganistic fantasies of ‘savage’ young boys running wild amongst the flawless tennis lawns and herbaceous borders of Edwardian gentility. As Saki noted: “nearly every red-blooded human boy has had war, in some shape or form, for his first love.”⁶ As Colin Ward observes, Thoreau’s *Walden* had barely raised a ripple of interest in America on its publication in 1854, yet found instant appeal on its re-publication in Edwardian England. W.B. Yeats’s evocation of erecting a small log cabin and planting nine rows of beans, was a direct reference to Thoreau.⁷

In the Edwardian age camping out was still something of a novelty, despite the romantic image of the Open-Air life celebrated by such authors as Robert Louis Stevenson, George Borrow, Jerome K. Jerome and Kenneth Grahame, with their descriptions of wandering tours, gypsy caravans, boating holidays and lavish picnics, as well as the more ‘serious’ philosophical musings of the American ‘Transcendentalist’ writers Henry Thoreau and Walt Whitman and Wiltshire nature-poet Richard Jeffries, who sought to portray the agricultural life of contemporary England. The Romantic poets of one hundred years before had themselves nodded approvingly at the rustic simplicity of the agrarian labouring classes and coveted their proximity to Nature.⁸ The Romantics had traditionally managed to mix a sentimental yearning for home, alongside a paradoxical and insatiable ‘wanderlust’ and consequently they accorded the image of the ‘Tramp’, ‘Vagrant’ and ‘Gypsy’ with a contradictory status. They were outcasts from society, potentially dangerous, but figures to admire. So the romantic myth of the ‘Wanderer’ was born. Free and

independent, able to roam at will and answerable to no man, enjoying the simple pleasures of life and dozing beneath hedgerows during sun-soaked, summer afternoons: here was a character able to indulge his instinctive love of the natural world, not just in the odd weekend break or snatched week's holiday once a year, but everyday of his life.

Historically the term 'Tramp' referred to itinerant workers on the road, while 'Vagabond' implied no immediate destination (ie. a 'Wanderer'). However such distinctions had become hazy and ill-defined. The Vagabond and Tramp presented a similar picture; they became 'safe' figures, acceptable anti-heroes to be secretly envied, for they retained those freedoms and benefits that modern society had cast off in the race for 'progress'. They became loveable rogues, depicted with their bundles slung over their backs, shabby and worn at the heel, but contented with their lot, with the 'open road' and a new day ahead of them. Even the gypsy, long having been an object of both rural and urban contempt and hostility, had by the late nineteenth century become a standard literary romantic character: the men being depicted as dark and brooding, with robust health and a wicked grin. The young women were equally enigmatic and bewitching due to their highly charged sexuality. The Amateur Camping Club defending gypsy culture and the travelling life, opposed two Moveable Dwellings Bills presented to Parliament in 1910 and 1911. The Honorary Secretary of the Gypsy Lore Society, R.A. Scott Macfie, writing in the pages of *Camping*, pointed to the hypocrisy of preaching "the gospel of fresh air", yet sanctioning the removal of gypsies, ("instinctive tent-dwellers") into urban accommodation. Romany culture needed to be preserved in an age when education and science were destroying folk-wisdom and country lore and when

“the music-hall comedian ha[d] strangled our beautiful ballads.”⁹ Cecil Sharp had also praised gypsy society, being thankful for its invariably isolated nature which had maintained the more authentic and older ballads and songs.¹⁰

Like Thoreau’s *Walden*, George Borrow’s two famous expositions of gypsy life *Lavengro* (1851) and *Romany Rye* (1857) were neglected on first publication, yet by the turn of the century had become popular best-sellers, available in numerous cheap re-prints. The image of the tramp changed too, from the menacing ‘tinker’ in Dickens’ *David Copperfield* (1849) to being the subject of the rhapsodies of Robert Louis Stevenson: “Give to me the life I love,/ Let the love go by me,/ Give the jolly heaven above/ And the by-way nigh me./ Bed in the bush with the stars to see,/ Bread I dip in the river –There’s the life for a man like me/ There’s the life for ever.”¹¹

Other popular Edwardian rural authors included E.V. Lucas whose handy, pocket-sized anthology *The Open Road* (described as “a garland of good and enkindling poetry and prose fitted to urge the folk into the open air”) had, by 1922, run to some thirty-one editions.¹² Similar acclaim was enjoyed by W.H. Davies with his *Autobiography of a Super-Tramp*, published in 1908, through the help of George Bernard Shaw. Davies’ personal account of his ‘hoboing’ across North America in the company of various colourful characters was exciting enough but what added an extra *frisson* to the story was that Davies lost his footing while attempting to board a train and, as a result, lost his leg. Davies painted a far from idealised picture of life on the open road, yet still celebrated it. His recollections of the London doss-houses to which he returned were bitter; he even attempted to go back on the road with a pedlar’s licence but the strain on his artificial leg proved too much. As Davies expressed in his

poetry, the life of a vagrant could, indeed, be glorious but also equally hellish.¹³ Journalists, along with novelists, clergymen, social reformers and philanthropists were also becoming keen to experience and assess for themselves the world of the tramp and vagrant: Jack London was to lead the way with his investigative *People of the Abyss* (1903) and started a trend that has carried on to today.¹⁴

Stephen Graham was another influential Edwardian exponent of the Open-Air life, producing a number of successful travelogues. Describing himself as a 'Bohemian', a 'life-wanderer' and a 'spiritual adventurer', he undertook long walking tours in Europe and North America, while his journeys eastwards into Russia popularised in the west the pre-revolutionary image of Holy Russia. Like Leslie Stephen and W.H. Davies he too favoured the word 'Tramp', defining 'tramping' as wandering with no particular destination in mind: "You get into your right place in the world right away... you are apt to feel the benefits of getting into a right relation towards God, Nature and your fellow Man. You get into air that is refreshing and free. You liberate yourself from the tacit assumption of your everyday life."¹⁵

Graham was to urge the dispensation of any notion of formal clothing while on a tramping tour. Photographs of rambling clubs at the turn of the century frequently showed the menfolk in stiff, starched collars, with gloves, heavy overcoats and hard, stove-pipe hats. In contrast Graham advocated a dressing down to simple, loose, open-necked shirts, old tweeds and 'army surplus' boots: "It is undoubtedly a delicious moment when Miles the gardener, seeing you come along in tramping rig omits to touch his hat to you as you pass."¹⁶

However Graham felt the need to make an attempt at distinguishing between his ideal of the 'Gentleman Tramp' and the 'hobos', 'rail-roaders', 'beachcombers' and 'won't works' who he found particularly in North America. He described them as "parasites of the charitable," whose way of life was neither beautiful, nor worthy of emulation:

They learn little on their wanderings beyond how to cadge, how to steal, how to avoid dogs and police. They are not pilgrims but outlaws and many would be highway robbers had they the vitality and pluck necessary to hold up wayfarers. Most of them are but poor walkers, so that the term 'tramp' is often misapplied.¹⁷

This attack might appear odd when one learns how much Graham admired W.H. Davies, himself a hobo in the United States. Perhaps it was Davies' literary merit that saved him. However it is interesting to note that Davies himself began to feel a certain amount of self-disgust and self-loathing at his own 'laziness' while on the road which led him to seek casual labour as a hop-picker and then on the notorious cattle-ships that traversed the Atlantic.

Graham's 'Gentleman-Tramp' was to be identified by his good humour, manners and honesty. The image he constructed was one of unlikely respectability, bearing scant resemblance to real life social outcasts. He gave little consideration to those forced into vagrancy through necessity. Rather, Graham maintained, he undertakes his life on the road as a conscious choice, an adventure undertaken willingly.

Curiously, there was much to be said 'in praise of idleness'. Maybe on account of the length of his trampings (they could last anything between six months and a year), Graham moved away from the vigorous 'pedestrianism' of the Victorian walkers and rambles. In stark contrast to Leslie Stephen's meticulous dealings with train timetables, meeting-points at allotted hours and

twenty-five mile walks, Graham took the advice of Robert Louis Stevenson and threw away his wrist-watch: "Life's quality is in moments, not in distance run."¹⁸

In Graham's search for the 'True Tramp' or 'Super Tramp', he had evidently not come across Gusto Gräser, a German vagabond and artist of the pre-war period who sought to live by the ideals of Thoreau, Whitman and the *Tao*. Gräser was part of the German Youth movement's so-called *Naturmenschen*. They rigorously eschewed as far as they could the trappings of modern civilisation with Gräser, for example, abandoning conventional dress in favour a toga (or *poncho* in winter) headband and rope sandals tied at the ankle. Tall, with flowing hair and a neatly trimmed beard, Gräser still retained a classic Germanic air of poise and strength. He was unfailingly popular with women. A strict vegetarian, his calling card was reputedly a blade of grass or an ivy leaf. Gräser won the admiration of a number of writers and intellectuals who regarded him as something of a prophet. He became involved with the artists' colony at Ascona in pre-war Switzerland with which D.H. Lawrence, Rudolf Laban, Isadora Duncan and Hermann Hesse were at various times associated. He refused to take a plot of land at Ascona, preferring instead to live his free, nomadic lifestyle. What little possessions he did have (mostly re-cycled refuse that had been foraged and salvaged) were kept in his cave (or *Felsenheim*) on the mountainside at Ascona.¹⁹ Gräser seems to have been the inspiration behind a number of novels, including Gustav Naumann's *Of the Noise in Dark Streets*, (1907) but more significantly Hermann Hesse's short story of 1914 *Kmulp* (Hesse having met Gräser in 1906). Gräser indeed wanted his life to be an expression of the 'freedoms' German society had forsaken in return for the

materialism of the Second Reich. Gräser went on to translate Lao-Tse into German and attempted to live by the Taoist principle of *wu wei* where one operates 'without coercion' (*ohne Zwang*). Refusing military service and the offer of land at Ascona was a rejection of ('Neolithic') hard work and *Zwang*. The Protestant work ethic repelled him. His suitably Paleolithic *Felsenheim*, surrounded by waterfalls, rocks, grottoes and mountain trees had a curiously Chinese feel to it. His Taoism made him smile at the pretensions of *gurus* and he resolutely refused to wield any form of power over would-be disciples. However he did offer the occasional lecture and in 1910, accompanied by a female companion, Elizabeth Dörr (the daughter of a Mainz newspaper editor who already had five children) began an extensive tour of Germany, Austria and Switzerland in a home-made green caravan, painted with Gräser slogans. They encountered nervous laughter, incredulous glances and official antipathy but also popular admiration. As at the end of Hesse's story, God says to the tramp, Knulp: "You are a wanderer in my name and wherever you went you brought the settled folk a little homesickness for freedom."²⁰

However despite the exhortations of men like Graham and Robert Louis Stevenson with their easy talk of campfires, wood smoke and coffee pots (even the *Boy's Own Paper* as early as 1886 depicted a group of boys cooking breakfast over a campfire) and the growing popularity of rambling and cycling clubs, the actual number of people prepared to camp out remained relatively small. Dr. Gordon Stables, the first President of the Caravan Club, had attempted to raise the profile of caravan-camping in the 1880s with his much publicised tour of the British Isles in his so-called 'land yacht', which led to a vogue in holidaymakers hiring a Romany-style caravan (or *vardo*) which was

the type of caravan which so enthused 'Mr. Toad', in *Wind in the Willows*, published in 1908.

Ironically the image of gypsy simplicity was rather at odds with Stables' caravan which had been specially commissioned and constructed by the Bristol Wagon Company, who were more used to building Pullman railway carriages. The result was an enormous and luxuriant affair, twice the size of a normal *vardo* and with a distinctive 'rail-car' feel to it. Indeed, there was nothing 'traditional' about Romany caravans anyway. Most gypsies had hitherto used the old-style 'bender tents' and it was only towards the end of the nineteenth century that some travelling folk adapted to using caravans which were already being produced by the manufacturers of specialised show and fairground equipment and transport. Duntons of Reading quickly established itself as a leading supplier of ornate, Romany caravans, providing the maximum comfort within a minimum of space.²¹

Yet most ramblers and cycle tourists still preferred either to return home at the end of the day, or to seek the comfort of a hired bed, rather than sleep out under canvas. Part of the problem lay in the relative lack of tent-manufacturers catering for the leisure market, with amateur campers having to rely on cumbersome and heavy military surplus 'bell-tents'. Many of the early pioneer campers designed and patented their own smaller, light-weight alternatives. A leading figure in cycling culture, T.H. Holding, promoted a two-man tent that could be packed away easily into the cycle panniers. Such was the natural affinity between so-called 'cycle camping' and 'pedestrian camping' that the Association of Cycle Campers was one of the main constituent bodies of the Amateur Camping Club (A.C.C.) when it was founded in 1909.

That same year a camping enthusiast sought to dispel some of the popular misconceptions that surrounded the pastime through the pages of *C.B.Fry's Magazine*, by describing the “Grand Life” of a camping holiday (admittedly, in an Army bell-tent pitched on a beach). He conceded that:

To the uninitiated this perhaps will sound more like a pastime for the days of Lent, than for the days of summer pleasure... (however) if the delights of the campfire and sleeping under the stars were better known, I do not doubt but the numbers of the more youthful of both sexes would make it their annual pleasure in place of crowded boarding houses and overstocked places of amusement to which they resort.²²

The Amateur Camping Club believed that camping was on the verge of a golden era. The prospects were looking rosy when in 1911 it was joined by the National Camping Club, thus swelling membership to just over a respectable 10,000 people. The A.C.C.'s Honorary President was Captain Robert Scott who was Guest of Honour at the A.C.C.'s Annual Dinner in 1911. After wishing the Club continuing success for the future in his speech, he was presented with an A.C.C. pennant, which Scott dutifully promised he would take with him on his forthcoming expedition to the South Pole. Scott's 'glorious fate' was to make him a camping martyr in the eyes of the many of the Open-Air fraternity and especially among the future Woodcraft movement. Yet the campers had another hero, a man who even more than Scott raised the profile of camping and the 'Great Outdoors', Robert Baden-Powell.

Footnotes for Chapter One, Woodcraft & the Industrial Age

¹ See, for example, D.H. Gresswell, 'I Meet the Oldest Rambler' in *The Hiker and Camper*, Vol.1 (11), (Dec. 1931), pp.27-29, and Vol.1 (12), (Jan. 1931), pp.22-23

² Ann Holt, 'Hikers and Ramblers: Surviving a Thirties' Fashion', in *The International Journal of Sport*, Vol.4 (1987), p.57

³ I.O.Evans, *Woodcraft and World Service* (London: Noel Douglas, 1930), p.96

⁴ *Camping*, Vol.6 (3), (March 1911)

⁵ For a good up-to-date discussion and analysis on the Boy Scout Movement, see Tim Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, (London: Hutchinson, 1989) and M.Rosenthal, *The Character Factory. Baden-Powell and the Origins of the Boy Scout Movement* (London: Collins, 1986)

⁶ See R. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: the Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement*, (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1993), especially the Introduction and Chapter 1. P. Howarth, *Play Up and Play the Game* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1973) and K. Drotner, *English Children and their Magazines, 1751-1945* (London & New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1988)

⁷ A useful summary is given in Chapter one of J. Marsh, *Back To The Land*, (London: Quartet Books, 1982). See also R. Williams, *Country and the City*, (St. Alban's: Paladin, 1975); K. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800*, (London: Allen Lane, 1983); R. Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, (New Haven: Yale University, 1974) and P.Lowe and J. Goyder, *Environmental Groups in Politics*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983).

⁸ An excellent analysis is provided by G. C. Webber: *The Ideology of the British Right 1918-1939* (London: Croom Helm, 1986). pp. 56-62

⁹ See J.Marsh, *Back to the Land* (London: Quartet Books, 1982), pp. 124-125

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102

¹¹ Mary Fels, *Joseph Fels; His Life and Work* (1920), p.53; cited in J.Marsh, *Back to the Land*, p.135

¹² J.Marsh, *Back to the Land*, pp.80-81

¹³ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* (London: Duckworth, 1927; reprint edn; London: William Maclellan, 1979), pp.252-259

¹⁴ J.Marsh, *Back to the Land*, p.245

¹⁵ See J. Craven, 'Health, Wholeness, Holiness': *Radical Right and Fascist Attitudes to the British Countryside 1918-1939* (University of Birmingham: M.Phil, 1993) see Chapter 1 "The Failure of the Left", pp. 38-44

¹⁶ J.Webb, *The Occult Establishment* (Illinois: Open Court, 1976), p.23

¹⁷ A.Wallace, *Walking, Literature & English Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p.13

¹⁸ K.Taplin, *The English Path* (Ipswich: Boydell Press, 1979), p.103

¹⁹ Anna Wallace, *Walking, Literature & English Culture*, pp.37-38

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.54

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- ²¹ G.Hindley, *Tourists, Travellers and Pilgrims* (London: Hutchinson, 1983), p.119
- ²² Anna Wallace, *Walking, Literature & English Culture*, p.62
- ²³ See A.Wallace, *Walking, Literature and English Culture*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), see especially Introduction, pp.10-13; see also M. Marples's classic, *Shank's Pony: A Study of Walking*, (London: Dent, 1959)
- ²⁴ A. Wallace, *Walking, Literature and English Culture*, p.114
- ²⁵ A. Wallace, *Walking*, p.73; pp. 168-169; see also J. Marsh, *Back To The Land*, pp. 39-59.
- ²⁶ G. Hindley, *Tourists, Travellers and Pilgrims*, p.112
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.110
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.119
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 121
- ³⁰ Pat Anderson, *Over the Alps* (London: Hart-Davis, 1969), pp.34-35. Goethe, on arrival, revelled in the widespread availability of grapes, figs and olives that were able to rectify his constitutional imbalance.
- ³¹ On Romantic and European attitudes to the Alps, including Wordsworth's, Goethe's, Byron's, Heine's, see Patrick Anderson, *Over The Alps* (London: Hart. Davis, 1969); also G. Hindley *Tourists, Travellers and Pilgrims* (London: Hutchinson 1983). Also useful on Wordsworth, see P. Bicknell and R. Woolf, *The Discovery of the Lake District, 1750-1810: A Context for Wordsworth*" (Grassmere: Trustees of Dove Cottage, 1982); J.K. Chandler, *Wordsworth's Second Nature: A Study of Poetry and Politics* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984). Stephen Gill, *Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). D. McCracken, *Wordsworth and the Lake District* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985)
- ³² R & J.Dubos, *The White Plague* (London: Gollancz, 1953), p.176
- ³³ Noel Annan, *Leslie Stephen, His Thought and Character in Relation to His Time* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1951), p.85
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.86
- ³⁵ John Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p.87
- ³⁶ L.Bryder, *Below Magic Mountain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p.47
- ³⁷ R. Holt, *Sport and the British* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp.88-89
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.89
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.88
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 93
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 89
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, p.94
- ⁴³ K.Taplin, *The English Path*, p.108

⁴⁴ Anna Wallace, *Walking, Literature & English Culture*, p. 126. Wallace records how Dorothy was chastened by her great aunt who considered such vigorous pedestrianism an 'unladylike' pursuit.

⁴⁵ Wallace, *Walking, Literature & English Culture*, p.171

⁴⁶ F. Trentmann, *Civilisation and its Discontents*, p.587

⁴⁷ N. Annan, *Leslie Stephen, His Thought and Character in Relation to His Time*, p.82

⁴⁸ J.Tyndall, *Glaciers of the Alps*, (London: 1860), pp.73-74; cited in N. Annan, *Leslie Stephen, His Thought and Character in Relation to His Time*, p.299

⁴⁹ N. Annan, *Leslie Stephen, His Thought and Character in Relation to His Time*, p.82

⁵⁰ J.Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes 1870-1914*, p.55

⁵¹ L. Stephen, *Hours In a Library* Vol.II (London: 1909), p.205

⁵² J.Pemle, *The Meditteranean Passion*, pp.254-5

⁵³ R. Holt, *Sport and the British*, p.93

⁵⁴ Cited in J.Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes 1870-1914*, p.91.

Footnotes for Chapter One , The Open Air Life and the Edwardian Imagination

¹ Noel Annan, *Leslie Stephen, His Thought and Character in Relation to His Time* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1951), pp.89-90; Anna Wallace *Walking, Literature & English Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p.171

² Helen Walker, 'The Popularisation of the Outdoor Movement, 1900-1940', in *British Journal of Sports History*, Vol.2, p.146

³ J. Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes 1870-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1933), p.120

⁴ *The Clerk*, (April 1890); cited by J.Lowerson in *Sport and the English Middle Classes 1870-1914*, p.118

⁵ Paul Delaney, *The Neo-Pagans* (London: Macmillan, 1987), p.57

⁶ John Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice amongst the Literary Intelligentsia 1880-1939* (London: Faber and Faber 1992), p.55

⁷ Colin Ward and Denis Hardy, *Arcadia For All* (London: Mansell, 1984), p.20

⁸ M. Crowther, 'The Tramp' in R. Porter, ed. , *Myths of the English*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), pp.105-106

⁹ R. A. Scott Macfie, 'The Treasure of Gypsies', in *Camping*, Vol. 4 (5) (November 1909), pp. 5-6

¹⁰ J.Marsh, *Back to the Land* (London: Quartet Books, 1982), p.88

¹¹ Robert Louis Stevenson, 'The Vagabond', cited in M. Crowther, 'The Tramp', p.95. Robert Louis Stevenson, like Stephen, Wordsworth and Hazlitt was in favour of solitary walking.

¹² M.Crowther, 'The Tamp', p.107

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- ¹³ 'One night when I went down
Thames' side, in London Town,
A heap of rags saw I,
And sat me down close by.
That thing could shout and bawl,
But showed no face at all.'

W.H.Davies, 'The Heap of Rags', in *Georgian Poetry*, (London: 1912), cited in M. Crowther, 'The Tramp', pp. 107-8. As Crowther notes, the patronage of George Bernard Shaw was somewhat ironic in that whilst he considered Davies "a free Knight of the highway", his fellow Fabians sitting on the Poor Law Commission were advocating the incarceration of vagrants; Crowther, p.108

- ¹⁴ M.Crowther, 'The Tramp', p.100

- ¹⁵ Stephen Graham, *The Gentle Art of Tramping*, (London: Robert Holden & Co., 1927), p.2

- ¹⁶ Ibid.

- ¹⁷ Ibid., p.3

- ¹⁸ Ibid., p.74

- ¹⁹ M. Green, *The Mountain of Truth* (London & Hanover: University Press of New England, 1986), pp.57-70

- ²⁰ Herman Hesse, *Knulp* (1915; this edn. trans. By R. Manheim; London: Cape, 1972), p.113

- ²¹ For more on the development of the Romany *vardo*, see C.H.Ward Jackson, *The Gypsy Caravan* (London: 1972) and M.W.Whiteman, *The History of the Caravan* (London: 1973)

- ²² F.Innes, 'A Camp on the Beach', in *C.B.Fry's Magazine*, Vol.XI (August 1909), pp.432-437

CHAPTER TWO: BADEN-POWELL AND THE OPEN-AIR LIFE

It is no contradiction that the ‘modernist’ architectural critic Nikolaus Pevsner, following his emigration to Britain, declared his sympathy with the Boy Scout Association.¹ William Lethaby, an enthusiast for the Arts and Crafts movement, felt that the best elements of civilisation were composed of “simple-housekeeping in the country, with tea in the garden; boy-scouting and tennis in flannels...” alongside (echoing D’Annunzio) the “beauty of efficiency” seen in a naval squadron.²

Scouting, as envisaged by Baden-Powell, was as much a reflection of ‘progressive’ concerns over health, Open-Air culture and leisure, as it was to do with Edwardian National Efficiency. The modern taste for simplicity, clarity and cool definition, in contrast to gaudy, lurid, complicated decadence can be seen reflected in the Scouts’ Woodcraft culture, be it in their attitudes to health, dress or art. Just as in architecture, the new mood of the twentieth century was to dispel fussy ornamentation, clutter and darkness in favour of lightness, air and space, so the Woodcrafters promised an honest and fundamental existence. Those too old, too over-fed or too decadent, those too far steeped in the ‘over-intellectualised’, stuffy and cluttered sitting rooms of sedentary bourgeois life, would have to make way for vigorous and clean Youth.

Baden-Powell’s idealisation of Youth, and the Open-Air Boy in particular, contributed to a major social debate of the late nineteenth century, which focussed on the growing numbers of young people in society. Late Victorian Britain was becoming a predominantly ‘youthful’ nation.³ The 1881 census showed that over 46% of the English and Welsh populations were under

twenty-four years of age. By 1901, over 50% of the same population were aged under twenty-five. What is more, these children and adolescents were highly conspicuous: compulsory attendance at board school up till the age of fourteen was only brought about with the Education Act of 1918.⁴ There was a distinct middle-class mood that displayed both sympathy and anxiety for these hordes of youngsters. They were seen as either 'idling about', or being targeted by the unscrupulous employer as well as the criminal. There was nothing romantic about child vagrancy or prostitution, so the Edwardian age gave society a new fear, that of the juvenile delinquent.⁵

These concerns were tied in with wider questions regarding the political, economic, physical and moral state of the nation. Victorian confidence had sagged into an Edwardian crisis of confidence. The National Efficiency debate was centred on why Britain was slipping against her nearest international competitors and what measures could be taken to halt the decline and secure the Empire. Britain's capacity to act as a world power had been questioned following the debacle of the South African Wars (1899-1902). The United States was now the world's foremost industrial nation and, closer to home, Germany spoke of claiming her rightful 'place in the sun' as an imperial power.⁶

In domestic politics, Lloyd George's notorious budget of 1909 upset many on the Right and those in traditional circles of power. The clipping of their Lordships' wings in the Upper House, the renewal of Trade Union militancy and industrial unrest, the claims of Women's Suffrage, all alerted the nation that change was afoot and that the Establishment was being challenged.⁷ Edward Carson's Loyalist defiance in Ulster in the face of Home Rule was a strong indication that such power would not be handed over lightly. According to

Geoffrey Searle, there appeared a new strand in Right-wing thinking which saw continuing concern that stability and the status quo were merely strengthening the grip of political and economic liberalism; so they cultivated a rhetoric of radicalism, rebellion and an undeclared threat of “direct action.”⁸

The appearance of pressure groups such as the Navy League, the National Service League and the Duty and Discipline Movement, articulated, in Social Darwinist language, the need for national vigilance and the necessity for Britons to be fitter, stronger and more disciplined in readiness for testing times ahead. Britain must now re-assert her traditional martial and masculine values. Much nervous energy was expounded upon the likelihood of a German invasion of Britain in the very near future; indeed, such paranoia had begun from the very birth of the unified German nation.

The author Sir Tomkyns Chesney felt sufficiently threatened by the outcome of the Franco-Prussian War and Britain’s defence policy to sound the alarm with *The Battle of Dorking*, published in *Blackwoods Magazine* in 1871. This fictional yet prophetic account of the possible scenario of a German assault on the British mainland led to a new era in espionage, political intrigue and war literature that was to carry on into the Edwardian period. The trend only intensified, producing such works as *England’s Peril*, *The Invasion of 1910* and *Spies of the Kaiser* all by the popular novelist William Le Queux. Even distinguished and erudite novelists were not immune: ‘Saki’ wrote *When William Came* in 1913, a modest and rather torpid account of London under German occupation. Erskine Childers’ *Riddle of the Sands* (1903) was another popular spy story but which has, unlike the rest of the genre, survived the test of time.⁹

Baden-Powell himself responded to and expressed many of these fears. As he saw it “the Fall of the Roman Empire was due to Bad Citizenship”, and consequently Britons would have to learn some “hard lessons.”¹⁰ What is more each and every Briton, irrespective of status or class, would be expected to re-evaluate themselves and to be prepared to play their part: “Play up! Each man in his place and play the game!”¹¹

Baden-Powell realised he had a natural talent for addressing young people, so he appealed to the boys of Britain directly, “Your forefathers worked hard, fought hard, and died hard, to make this Empire for you. Don’t let them look down from Heaven and see you loafing about with your hands in your pocket, doing nothing to keep it up.”¹²

It was clear to Baden-Powell that the Youth of the nation had an extremely important role to play. Without their strength and commitment the Empire would soon be in jeopardy. The Open-Air Boy had to grow in to the ‘Open-Air Man’, a creature much needed, if the country were to prosper and remain virile. The ideal was one of uncomplicated self-discipline and health, of a man whose natural intelligence was free from the clutter of ‘book-learning’ and who had escaped the self-indulgence and decadence of modern civilisation.

Baden-Powell exhorted British boys to avoid becoming the ‘slack-jawed wasters’, the unfit and lazy youths which he was fond of depicting ‘lounging about’ on street-corners, with surreptitious cigarettes poking out of the corner of their mouths. Britain did not need any more ‘onlookers’ but, rather, boys with ‘gumption’. He postulated that if and when the enemy attacked, it would be right at the heart of the Empire, targeting England herself. In such a scenario, “Be prepared to die for your country if need be; so that when the moment arrives you

may charge home with confidence, not caring whether you are going to be killed or not.”¹³

With hindsight the message that Baden-Powell delivered in 1908 jars with the image of those same boys, now the young men of 1914, ‘charging home with confidence’ over the fields of France and Belgium. However it is too easy to simply dismiss *Scouting for Boys* as a mere militarist’s or imperialist’s tract, to the denigration of its author. Such an approach is in danger of overlooking how much it was a product of its own time, as well as overlooking what else was in the book, including many other themes that seem to contradict its apparently reactionary nature. With its easy, ‘chatty’ and non-patronising style, *Scouting for Boys* enraptured and enthralled subsequent generations of boys, not only in Britain and the Empire, but also abroad in Europe and America.

One fourteen year-old boy who began collecting the serialised instalments was John Hargrave. Son of an impecunious landscape artist, Hargrave was born in Midhurst, Sussex, and not, as one rumour purported, in a gypsy tent on the Essex marshes.¹⁴ The family was soon to remove to Hawkeshead in the Lake District where their father, Gordon, could paint more saleable pictures. There John immersed himself in the rural landscape but following the untimely death of his elder brother Elwood (who contracted meningitis after being soaked in a rainstorm that he was attempting to sketch) and the death of an infant brother too, the Hargraves were to move south again, this time to Latimer, Buckinghamshire.

The two boys’ talents had seemed to follow that of their father. Before Elwood’s death the plan had been to send him to study art in Paris. John proved

that he too had a precocious skill when, back at Hawkeshead, the school's art-teacher refused to have him in the class.¹⁵

The death of Mrs. Hargrave two years after their arrival at Latimer meant that John and his father began to form a deep and lasting relationship, with Gordon taking it upon himself to supplement John's education at home. It seems that John was at first, a quiet and reserved boy who, encouraged by his father, focussed his energies into a deep attachment to the natural world that he expressed through art. In 1908 young Hargrave encountered *Scouting for Boys*, though it seems he was already involved with a scout-style gang at school who adopted the heron as their badge or totem. Excited by Baden-Powell's Scouting ideal, Hargrave discovered that he had natural leadership talents and quickly established himself as the leader of a newly-formed local group, Eagle Patrol.

What particularly caught Hargrave's imagination were the lengthy sections in *Scouting for Boys* which dealt with a new sport called 'Woodcraft'. Of course, it was not a sport in the traditional sense of the word: there were no balls, no teams nor competitive spirit, but it involved nevertheless a whole variety of exciting and fascinating activities which were to take place outside in the countryside. What was more, it was bound up in a philosophical code that spoke to Hargrave's innate love of the landscape. This sport was not actually new either. It had been used by some of the most inspirational figures in history, as well as being practised by some of the world's most 'exotic' races and peoples. Thus it was an extremely 'grown-up' sport, with a glorious tradition behind it to prove its worth and to fuel the imagination of the younger generation. By 1910 Hargrave had earned his 'Woodcraft name', which was invested upon him by his fellow Scouts. A solemn ceremony was carried out

one night in Chorley Wood with Hargrave's Patrol sitting in a sandpit around a camp-fire. In recognition of his excellent Scoutcraft and his skill and cunning in the field, John Hargrave became known as 'White Fox – Wa Wha Goosh'.

The Brownsea Island experimental camp, held by Baden-Powell in 1907, set the future tone of Scouting. A group of boys and adolescents were party to a successful camping expedition on the Dorset island which convinced Baden-Powell of the viability of Scouting. As is well known, Baden-Powell's mind had been ruminating on a scheme for inculcating 'Citizenship' in youngsters for some years. Popular legend has it that the idea sprang up during Baden-Powell's defence of Mafeking against the Boer besiegers between 1899-1900, when boys and youths were employed by the military and came to be involved in the day-to-day survival of the town.¹⁶

Whatever the military origins of Scouting, Baden-Powell emphasised the role of imagination, adventure and 'masculine recreation' in his initiative, "to put some of the wild man into the boy."¹⁷ Stephen Graham, who was to become a member of the Kibbo Kift Advisory Council and thus provided a living bridge between the Edwardian 'super tramps' and the post-war Woodcrafters, noted in 1923 that Scouting was born in the days before radio and cinema when there were too few playing fields. Before the advent of the Boy Scouts the notion of a child sleeping out of doors was extremely unorthodox. At best, liberal parents might have allowed their offspring a one-off, night-time adventure within the safe confines of the garden.¹⁸

By joining the Scouts a youngster had radical new vistas opening up in front of him. The shortened trousers and bare knees of the new movement were taken as a symbol of pride: a robust assertion of health and 'manliness' that

rejected the dominant Edwardian ethos of buttoning-up and cossetting children's bodies. Baden-Powell targeted the 'soft' boy who had clung for too long to Mother's or Nanny's apron-strings. The child would be turned out of his overheated bedroom and given them an intoxicating taste of the Open-Air life. Outdoor physicality in an age of increasing urban, non-physical lifestyles, was about reclaiming health, building strength and re-discovering one's natural instincts and balance.

Despite a prestigious career of service in the British Empire with its self-appointed mission to 'civilise' the many varied 'primitive' peoples of the world, Baden-Powell had a respect for those societies that seemed to be in harmony with their 'natural' selves. The Zulu tribes of southern Africa had held a particular fascination for Baden-Powell ever since he faced them in battle in 1888. In *Scouting for Boys* he describes a Zulu initiation rite for male youths on the edge of manhood, whereby they are dispatched in to the bush where they have to survive for a month on their own: "It is a pity that British boys cannot have the same sort of training before they are allowed to consider themselves men."¹⁹ This sentiment was not unusual. The novelist Maurice Hewlett who sat on the Kibbo Kift Advisory Council before his death in 1923, wrote in *The Forest Lovers* (1898) of a girl disguised as a boy who comes to live with charcoal-burners in the woods. Although life is hard and she is regularly beaten and half-starved, she in fact blossoms under the Spartan conditions: "all this made for health."²⁰ It was the Zulu's supposed hardiness and martial character which most impressed Baden-Powell. They had swarmed into the British public's consciousness in the 1870s, following the Isandhlwana Massacre and the defence at Rorke's Drift. Their notoriety was reinforced by Henry Rider

Haggard's romantic portrayal of the Zulu in *King Solomon's Mines* in 1885. Their reputation for ferocity, as well as their colourful ritual, also captured the imagination of Baden-Powell. He was particularly impressed by the pre-battle, rhythmic stomping and chanting that seemed to paralyse an enemy into inactivity and the Zulu 'Eengoyama' chorus: "He is a lion! Yes, he is better than that, he is a hippopotamus!" came to be adopted by the Boy Scouts as one of their most famous 'war-cries'.

The Zulus, who were one of many primitive peoples feted for their natural Woodcraft skills as well bravery and strength in war, helped to reinforce the 'masculine' quality of organised Woodcraft. There was nothing, according to Baden-Powell, soft or effeminate about the Open-Air life. Neither was Woodcraft a mere continuation of the 'passive' nature-study of Victorian school-days. Woodcraft could not be learnt at a school-desk nor sitting at home. Instead the Open-Air Boy was encouraged to interact with the natural world, to respect its laws and, in return, learn its lore and secrets, thus appealing to a boy's natural love of discovery and intrigue. Woodcraft was to be eminently practical. Woodcraft in this sense, an extension of the late Victorian and Edwardian growth in Natural History societies and clubs which also encouraged immediate contact with the living world.

Part of Baden-Powell's genius lay in his instinctive knowledge of what appealed to boys. Acknowledging this talent, Baden-Powell believed it stemmed from a refusal to totally grow up and put away the 'magic of childhood'. Baden-Powell had long harboured a love of costume, amateur theatricals, 'gang-shows' and dance. During the siege of Mafeking and even on into old age, he would revel in giving performances, often 'in drag', of the 'Skirt Dance'. Jeal also

notes that J.M. Barrie's play *Peter Pan*, 'The Boy Who Never Grew Up', was to hold a particular attraction for Baden-Powell from the first time he saw it in 1905.²¹ This flavour for fantasy, even among adults, affected the very highest echelons in the kingdom: Derek Jarrett records how, on a visit to Eton in 1883, Lord Randolph Churchill discovered everyone discussing the recently published *Treasure Island*. On his return to Parliament, he recommended to Arthur Balfour that he should read the book. Word quickly spread and soon demand outstripped supply, leading to an exasperated William Gladstone combing London for his own copy.²²

Baden-Powell was to request that his Scoutmasters should also attempt re-kindle the flame of childlike (as opposed to 'childish') fantasy. In *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell explained:

All you have to do is give rein to your imagination... you must see things with your boys' eyes. To the orchard must, as it is with them, be Sherwood Forest with Robin Hood and his Merry Men in the background; the fishing harbour must be the Spanish Main with its pirates and privateers; even the town common may be a prairie teeming with buffaloes and Red Indians.²³

Imagination, play and recreation were the key to a healthy and balanced childhood, as were order and discipline. The child's, and in particular the boy's natural affinity for signs, symbols, mystery and make-believe should not be put to one side on reaching adolescence or adulthood, neither should he ever abandon his youthful vibrancy, his creativity or his natural sense of awe and wonder at the living world around him. Baden-Powell was also influenced greatly by Kenneth Graham's *The Golden Age* (1895) which speculated that a child's world was more exciting and more 'real' than everyday adulthood. One of his favourite paintings was a sentimental piece by Ernest S. Carlos, in which a father gazes wistfully at his 'liberated' Scouting son. The picture *If I Were A*

Boy Again was to feature in Scout propaganda, urging men to join as Scoutmasters so that they might “renew their youth” as ‘Boy-Men’.²⁴

Baden-Powell still seemed to be somewhat affected by the widespread *fin-de-siecle* experience of *ennui*, a mood of boredom, malaise and ‘lost innocence’ in a rapidly changing, more sophisticated and relatively more comfortable society. George Saintsbury believed that science and intellectualism had “dulled and enfeebled” the modern world: things would only improve when “we have bathed once more, long and well, in the romance of adventure and passion.”²⁵

Baden-Powell, while never wishing to describe himself as a child psychologist nor an educationalist, did share the opinion of many of those who wished to ‘democratise’ the benefits of childhood and to separate the two worlds of child and adult by recognising the concept of ‘adolescence’. It was hoped that that the children of the working classes could also experience the childhood enjoyed by their wealthier peers.²⁶

Such a view was not wholly appreciated; the Scouts were never to rise above the image of being a predominantly middle-class organisation. Despite Baden-Powell’s call for cross class unity in the national interest, there was considerable hostility to the venture from the onset. Leslie Paul, who like John Hargrave and many Kinsmen started out in the Boy Scouts, recalled the animosity and derision heaped on the Scouts, or “Brussell Sprouts” as they were called by youths in Edwardian south-east London.²⁷

Others criticised the Scouting movement for feeding boys’ minds with fantastical and thus ultimately unrealistic ideas. It is curious, as Jeal notes, that a body which has subsequently been criticised for overt conservatism and

militarism was often berated for being too radical and allowing boys excessive freedoms.²⁸ A pseudonymous attack from a certain 'Captain Noemo' in 1912 on the escapism of the Scouts and especially on the pretensions of Woodcraft training in an urban context, put forward some of the objections:

After few dead cats and many empty meat-tins have been successfully removed, 'camp fires' are made out of waste paper and an orange box kindly presented by the local grocer. Seated on dust-heaps near these fires, within the sound of tram-cars, railways, and the raucous voice of the itinerant vendor of winkles and pot ferns, little boys play very seriously at being backwoodsmen. Maybe they are far away in thought - far away in the forests of Canada or the Australian bush... We are told this is character-building, but I refuse to believe that character will ever be built by unsettling the minds of the young, by turning their minds from practical everyday life and the best way to live it, to dreams and visions of a life that not one in a hundred will ever be called upon to live. So strong is the imagination of the youngster that it may be several months before he begins to ask himself what earthly use the knowledge of how to light a damp fire with one match will be to him when he answers an advertisement for a junior clerk... It is because romance and make-belief are given such an important place in Scouting that it is so popular with the small boy... Semaphore signalling is much more interesting than English history; Latin is not to be compared with marching songs and Zulu incantations...²⁹

Such views indicate the importance of not simply categorising the Boy Scouts as a reactionary product of the National Efficiency debate, rather, it had a definite streak of 'rebelliousness'. In the apocrypha of the early, *ad hoc* days of its existence, Scouting tales abounded of marauding bands of boys earning the wrath of local farmers and landowners, of clergymen noting the absences from Sunday services and Sunday School of boys eager to go 'patrolling'.

However the critics were unable to deflect the irresistible rise of Scouting. What is more, the Woodcraft element in Scouting was important in popularising the movement. Before the arrival of the Scouts, the Boys' Brigade (established in 1883) had held camps, albeit of a formal martial character, as had the Church Lads (established 1891) and other religious youth groups.³⁰ Indeed from the 1880s onwards there appeared a whole welter of schemes emanating

from the liberal middle-classes, the public schools and universities, which sought to take the disadvantaged, urban child out of his environment (albeit for a short period only) and introduce him to the countryside. Owing to the generally nonchalant manner in which such schemes were met, these initiatives tended to resort to 'drilling' as an alternative way to entice working class youth to the clubhouse.

The Boy Scouts, although they failed to make as much of an impression as Baden-Powell had hoped, did enjoy more success than these initiatives. Baden-Powell went beyond 'drilling,' to offer the child the opportunity to sleep out under canvas, to learn how to make and mend his camping kit, go 'man-hunting' in the woods, and to learn about the natural world in a safe environment. Boys were also encouraged to take an interest in the study of other traditional cultures of the world. Admittedly the more 'war-like' peoples were considered to be more fascinating, for example Maories, Gurkhas and the Maasai, but there was an element of multiculturalism within Scouting which was to be later developed by the Woodcraft movement.

The Japanese in particular were held up as a race worthy of emulation. As a rapidly industrialising nation they had still managed to retain many elements of their traditional culture, not least the chivalric code of the ancient Samurai, the *bushido*. Although Britain had not yet tested Japan's mettle in battle, the humiliation of the Russians at the hands of the Japanese in 1905 prompted further admiring glances. Baden-Powell applauded the Japanese 'spirit'. Here was a relatively small nation who relied on the 'character' and discipline of its soldiers rather than sheer weight of numbers. *Scouting for Boys* contained stories of Japanese heroism and self-sacrifice from the recent war.

Japan's success was put down to the cleanliness of its people (owing to their frequent bathing) their Spartan diet (chiefly rice, vegetables, fruit and only a modest amount of meat) and regular exercise. Ju-Jitsu was held to be especially beneficial and English guides to this martial art were to be regularly advertised in Scouting publications.³¹

Baden-Powell's fondness for the Zulu has already been noted and in 1911 the Boy Scouts gave testimony to their leader's imagination in a quite extraordinary fashion. On 4th July the Scouts were to rally in Windsor Great Park in front of King George who had been personally impressed by the movement and wished to review them. Baden-Powell, who had been knighted by Edward VII two years previously, deployed his boys, not as one might expect in the serried ranks of the British Army but in Zulu battle formation of a vast 'horseshoe', representing the two horns of a charging bull. What happened next was described by an eye-witness:

There was a moment's pause of dead silence and then a sudden roar filled the air, and the whole mighty horseshoe of boys with one impulse leapt forward from either side, rushing as only boys can rush, gathering force as they came, screaming out the rallying cries of their different patrols, as they came in, a whole kaleidoscopic mass of colour with flags fluttering, hats waving, knees glinting, in a great charge towards the King. Then at a sign, the whole mass stopped its rush, up went a forest of staves and hats, and higher into the sky went the shrill screaming of the boys in a cry that gripped the throat of every onlooker...³²

To a nation whose Establishment might have been wondering about the next generation's capability to fight and preserve the Empire, such a display would have been reassuring. This contained experiment in 'Primitivism' reflected a newly restored assertion of colonial confidence, only recently dented by the South African wars. Here Baden-Powell demonstrated that the primitive spirit and vigour of the 'Black Warrior' had been re-awoken in the hearts of

‘civilised’ English schoolboys. *Punch* magazine commemorated the event by depicting the Boy Scouts storming the battlements and capturing Windsor Castle. The cartoon of the Scouts also subconsciously focussed the public’s attention on that most easily recognisable aspect of Scouting, its distinctive dress. From the very beginning, the Scouting costume was deliberately distinctive, radical and innovative.³³

The ‘shortened trousers’ and the ‘glinting knees’, which prompted the derision of urban working class youths, were seen as a symbol of ‘manliness’ and robust health, as well as a rebellion against stuffy, starched, bourgeois convention. It spoke of a rejection of the sedentary world of middle class respectability. When asked many years later what had prompted him to join the Scouts, Hargrave gave an unexpected reply: it was to do with the ‘cowboy’ hats (‘stetsons’ or ‘Rangers hats’, as they are known today,) which they wore. Baden-Powell had given long deliberation to the choice of uniform. He wanted to create a certain image as well ensuring practicality. The complete outfit was mostly built around Baden-Powell’s personal experiences from his long military career. The very composition of the uniform also provides clues as to the impetus that lay behind the experiment. In contrast to the buttoned-up tunic and pill-box hat of the Boys’ Brigade, the easy open-necked flannel shirt of the Scouts spoke of the Open-Air life as experienced by Baden-Powell on the South African *veldt*, the neckerchief to protect against the sun and dust, the shorts to keep cool.³⁴

Baden-Powell had been dispatched to serve in the Bulawayo Field Force during the second uprising of the Ndbele tribesmen of Matabeleland in 1896. His regular Cavalry uniform was put to one side in favour of the more relaxed,

yet more suitable attire of the mounted Volunteer units, usually comprised of local farmers. In stark contrast to the British Army's red-coated attempt to deal with the Zulus some twenty years previously and the sweaty, exhausting pursuit of the Mad Madhi in the Sudanese desert, this relatively small imperial war offered a chance for the British press to focus on a situation which the reading public were hungry for. Here was an exciting campaign in which forces of the Empire were engaging with the enemy, not in a traditional European manner, but on the enemy's own terms and, what is more, they were winning.³⁵

It should be noted that the increase in colonial wars, as opposed to wars conducted in the European arena, meant that a general review of military planning was needed. For instance reconnaissance had traditionally been seen as a 'necessary but not very important' part of war.³⁶ The British Army still had an over-riding wish to fight in terms of set-piece battles. Even during the Maori Wars of the 1860s, the dripping fern forests of New Zealand were to witness British troops attempting to march in close formation, in the hope of launching a frontal assault on the enemy.

The relative lack of concern about the value of reconnaissance can be indicated by the continuing practise of reliance on the hiring of local guides and levies of a particular region. Baden-Powell experienced at first-hand the unreliability and lack of discipline of such sources while involved in the Ashanti Expedition of 1895 to 1896. The operation highlighted to him the importance of military scouting.³⁷

The Matabele campaign, despite its relative unimportance in terms of Imperial history owing to it being a war conducted in the main by settlers, police and mounted Irregulars and Volunteers, made a virtue out of a necessity. The

image that filled the pages of the British papers was one of tough, sun-hardened Frontiersmen, wearing slouched cowboy hats, bandoleers slung across their chests and with revolvers hanging Western-style at the hip. The arrival of legendary big-game hunter, Frederick Selous, as well as volunteer units from Canada, Australia and New Zealand, heightened the excitement.

The need, as in the case against the Ndbele, to learn the skills of the enemy so that one might deny them their advantage in the bush, necessitated a certain amount of respect on behalf of the White Man towards his foe. In contrast to the United States Army which found it difficult to swallow its racial pride and to find anything positive about the indigenous peoples of North America, the British military did sometimes, albeit grudgingly, acknowledge a worthy adversary.³⁸

As well as exotic foreigners, Baden-Powell recommended to the military scouts and later to the Boy Scouts, that they study and learn from two western cultural icons: Harry Houdini and Sherlock Holmes. The former was to be applauded for his strength and skill as an escapologist, as well as for feats of concentration and memory. Baden-Powell was to recommend palmonism as a way of training scouts in two military pamphlets *Reconnaissance and Scouting* (1883) and *Cavalry Instruction* (1888). The fictional Holmes was to be noted for his attention to detail, his use of logic and his deductive powers. Holmes and Houdini were highlighted as role models in *Aids to Scouting for NCOs and Men* (1899) before making numerous appearances in Scouting literature from 1908 onwards.³⁹

They were used by Baden-Powell to support him in his thesis that there was no reason why anyone should not be able to scout, track and live and fight

in the wilderness as well as any native; if the Black Man merely learnt these skills from his fore-fathers then what was to prevent a White Man who was prepared to apply himself being taught the same techniques? Military scouting was about patience, a keen eye and commonsense. There was no mystery to it; rather, it was a science open to all. No wonder when *Scouting for Boys* appeared, the message that every boy could learn the ‘ways’ of such figures as Frederick Selous and Daniel Boone proved so appealing.

The appearance of *Scouting for Boys* in 1908 fed into an already rich vein of boys’ literature with an Imperial flavour. Ironically, this Edwardian literary ‘re-discovering’ of the Frontiers of the Empire came at a time when the actual frontiers were rapidly coming to a close and opportunities for ‘adventure’ were fast diminishing. Despite a youth being raised on an exciting diet of colonial and historical romance from the likes of G.A. Henty, W.E. Henley, W.H.G. Kingston and Edgar Wallace, complimented by an additional helping of boys’ magazines such as *Union Jack* and *Triumph*, he would still be far more likely (as ‘Captain Noemo’ would have argued) to find himself sitting behind a clerk’s desk in a city office than aboard a whaler setting sail for the South Atlantic.

While much of the work of the authors listed above has, by and large, failed to stretch over and beyond its time, other Edwardian adventure writers have remained popular, perhaps the foremost being John Buchan, Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling and Henry Rider Haggard. Of course, their audiences were never intended solely to be children: elder brothers would enjoy the latest instalment of the serialised story in *The Captain*, while fathers read and re-read *King Solomon’s Mines* which was dedicated to “all big boys and little boys who

read it.”⁴⁰ Collectively, these authors went beyond mere yarns of adventure. Along with the writings of poets such as Henry Newbolt and Robert Bridges, they helped create a new world of the imagination, as well as codifying the dominant ethos of the period.⁴¹ Jarrett states that the evidence for this thirst for works of ‘imagination’, can be seen in the plethora of new public libraries being commissioned in the late nineteenth century, which outstripped the building of new churches. Andrew Carnegie endowed 3,000 new libraries in the United States and replicated that figure in Britain too. What is more, the reading public devoured these new works of fictional fantasy and adventure.⁴²

Re-worked tales also came from Britain’s history. The glories of the Tudor and Elizabethan Ages were particularly popular, as were stories from the Imperial Frontier. However, there was yet another Frontier which challenged and eventually surpassed the Imperial Frontier culture of the British Empire, providing one of the most enduring icons of the twentieth century: that of the American Frontier and the Cowboy. The concepts of the ‘Wilderness’ and the Frontier have always played a large role in the formation and development of the American psyche, from the early days when colonial settlers hewed a living from under the shadow of the great Eastern forests, to the later Westward Movement and the opening up of the new territories. The literature of Fenimore Cooper and Longfellow, of folk heroes such as Boone and Crockett, Lewis and Clarke, etched itself onto the nation’s consciousness long before the advent of the Cowboy. The Backwoodsmen, trappers, ‘Mountain Men’ and Pioneers represented the ideal of the American ‘Frontiersman’, himself a personification of the spirit of the new nation: tough, independent, idiosyncratic and democratic. New heroes such as Mark Twain’s ‘Huckleberry Finn’, a character much

admired by Robert Louis Stevenson for instance for his easy, vagabond lifestyle, carried on the ideal into the latter half of the nineteenth century.⁴³

This image went forward with the wagon-trails heading West during the mid-nineteenth century. Those who sought to fulfil America's 'Manifest Destiny' were likewise said to have been moulded by the wilderness they were seeking to master. From the mining creeks, cattle ranches and homesteads of the West, the idealised Frontiersman expanded to include cowboys, farmers, prospectors, as well as the military scouts and so-called 'Indian Killers' who helped conquer the lands of the Native American; men such as Kit Carson, Jim Bridger and Bill Hamilton. As with the British Empire, the ending of the nineteenth century in the United States brought with it the limits of expansion and the closing of the Frontier, perhaps enhancing the appeal of such figures. With a similar pattern of urbanisation and industrialisation, as in Britain, these Open-Air characters seemed to keep alive the 'soul of the nation'. The 'West' symbolised the rugged, tough, original spirit of America, in contrast to the sophisticated, 'soft' eastern United States.

Perhaps the most famous of all the 'Indian Killers' was William 'Buffalo Bill' Cody, the showman who was equally adept at re-inventing himself and the United States' Frontier heritage. His 'Wild West Show' began in 1883 and was soon attracting praise from all quarters. In 1887 the show toured Europe and Queen Victoria attended a Royal Command Performance at Earl's Court. Complete with mustang horses, buffalo, steers, sharp-shooters and gun-slingers, as well as real-life Red Indians recruited from the reservations, the show also featured the famous 'Deadwood Stage'. The battle re-enactment climaxed with

Buffalo Bill himself grappling with Indian Chieftain 'Yellow Hand', before 'scalping' him.⁴⁴

Cody proved a fertile source of inspiration for the growing industry of pulp fiction and dime novels built around the Wild West theme. Cody had fallen in with Ned Buntline of the *New York Weekly*, a pioneer in low-brow literature and, together they worked an extraordinarily profitable partnership, with Cody proving more than willing to 'play up' to the part allotted to him by this Eastern journalist. Cowboy literature, with pulp fiction, existed alongside more respected works (such as Owen Wister's *The Virginian* of 1892, and *Evolution of a Cow-Puncher* of 1898) and soon found its way into Europe. Baden-Powell, for instance, was constantly to recommend in Scouting literature, Bill Hamilton's reminiscences of the 'Buckskin Rangers' in his *My Sixty Years on the Plains*. In Germany, the Wild West theme was immensely popular, with Karl May (1848-1912), a prolific author, producing a series of Western adventure stories albeit with a suitably Germanic themes. May's stories were much admired by a young Adolf Hitler who went on to re-read them in the 1930s after becoming Chancellor.⁴⁵

Enthusiasm for the Wild West themes that influenced Scouting iconography paradoxically tended to celebrate the Cowboy's 'arch-enemy', the Red Indian. Dime novels of the late nineteenth century tended to demonise Native Americans, yet the earlier literature of Fenimore Cooper and Longfellow had enobled the Indian to such a degree, that he was well equipped to deal with the vulgarities of pulp fiction. 'Red Indianism' was to play a crucial role in Scouting but, as shall be discussed, even more so in the Woodcraft movement.

Much of Baden-Powell's military scouting skills which he employed to great effect while on active service in southern Africa came from his experience of fighting alongside an ex-United States Army scout, Frederick Burnham, who had served in the campaign against the Apache Indians. Burnham had also volunteered for the Irregulars during the *first* Matabele campaign following his arrival in Matabeleland as a colonist in 1893. After the death of his daughter during the siege of Bulawayo, he at once offered his services in quelling the rebellion.

Until he met Burnham, Baden-Powell had not used the term 'Woodcraft' before.⁴⁶ In his account of the war, *The Matabele Campaign* (1896), Baden-Powell gives a detailed account of the value of military scouting and woodcraft, which is described as "the art of noticing the smallest details" while on the *veldt*.⁴⁷ Burnham and Baden-Powell seemed to have struck up a close relationship and, according to the latter's memoirs, he learnt many techniques from Burnham, including the art of orienteering with neither map nor compass, trapping and discovering water and game. Owing to the successes of the military operation Baden-Powell, perhaps forgetting Burnham's American nationality, let his enthusiasm get the better of him: "We, English, have a talent for woodcraft and the spirit of adventure and independence already born in the blood, to an extent to which no other nationality can lay claim..."⁴⁸

In fact, the United States military had been far more forward than the British in devoting resources to military scouting, having long employed 'friendly' Indians, trappers, hunters and 'mountain men' in the Indian wars. Although in time the Army came to rely on its own personnel who could be used in a combat as well as a reconnaissance role (ie. 'skirmishers').

The legendary reputation of men like Buffalo Bill meant that Burnham's exploits in southern Africa with the Bulawayo Field Force were easily accorded mythical status when written up and dispatched back home by Baden-Powell to papers like *The Daily Chronicle* which catered for the British public's love of Imperial adventure and romance. There is little doubt that Baden-Powell relished the chance of riding with such a character and reports were full of anecdotes about Burnham's audacity, cunning and skill. In one story which Baden-Powell provided sketches for, Burnham was meant to have tracked down and assassinated a Ndbele witch-doctor before making a daring escape from deep inside enemy territory. In fact he had killed the priest of a friendly tribe. Nevertheless, magazines such as *Young England* and *Chums* celebrated Baden-Powell and Burnham for their heroism. *Boys of our Empire* made Burnham the 'Champion of the Week' while the Ndbele, apparently, honoured him as 'He-Who-Sees-in-the-Dark.'⁴⁹

Military scouting was so successful in creating such a romantic image for itself that many Irregular units often sought the official recognition of being 'Scouts'. By 1899 Baden-Powell remarked that Light Infantry 'skirmishers' were often referring to themselves as Scouts.⁵⁰ The drama of military scouting was heightened by events in Cuba in 1898. The United States went to war with Spain and Theodore Roosevelt, big-game hunter, outdoor sports enthusiast, founder of the 'Boone and Crockett, helped establish the 1st. U.S. Volunteer Cavalry. The American Press dubbed it the Cowboy Corps., but it became more popularly known as 'the Rough Riders'. As their song put it:

"Rough, rough, we're the stuff

We want to fight and we can't get enough!

- Whoopee!”⁵¹

The Corps., which was raised from farmers and stockmen from the West as well as Eastern urbanites seeking adventure, helped reinforce the image of the American Frontiersman, just at the time the American Frontier was closing and the United States was looking towards her own Imperial ambitions. Buffalo Bill offered to lead ‘the boys’ down to Cuba, but Roosevelt reserved that honour for himself, fighting bravely at the Battle of San Juan Hill and enhancing his future political career.⁵² Like Baden-Powell, Roosevelt too was to stress the value of romance in everyday life: “The most priceless possession of the human race is the wonder of the world. Yet latterly the utmost endeavours of mankind have been directed towards the dissipation of that wonder.”⁵³

The image of the dashing ‘Rough Riders’ was soon to translate to South Africa, where batches of volunteers were disembarking at Cape Town to reassert the Empire’s respective Frontier pride in the face of Boer intransigence and the Army’s ineptitude. One of the most extraordinary units was formed by the Scottish laird Lord Lovat whose ‘Lovat’s Scouts’ were recruited from his estate’s ghillies and farm-workers. (After fighting in South Africa, they went on to serve with distinction in both world wars.) Soon, numerous colonial Irregular units had been established, such as the Canadian ‘Strathcona’s Horse’ which proved to be expert at leading the Boers into ambush, earning themselves the nickname, ‘the Scalphunters’, evocative of Red Indian prowess and, later on, used in Woodcraft circles. New Zealand units, following Roosevelt’s example, called themselves ‘Rough Riders’, as well as sporting the pirate’s skull and crossbones as their badge, thereby alluding to their ruthlessness.⁵⁴

A lack of discipline and rowdiness were common complaints against the Irregulars from Regular army officers and even Baden-Powell acknowledged there was a problem. The adventurer Roger Pocock, who served in 'Sutler's Scouts', viewed his comrades as being part of Kipling's 'Lost Legion', calling them "a gang of robbers, licensed to plunder the Boers."⁵⁵ Burnham, who Baden-Powell had described as 'a sort of better class Buffalo Bill', had earned the opprobrium of British officers in Matabeleland when his collection of severed ears (a throwback to his Apache War days) was discovered. (There were also rumours of cowardice following Burnham's escape from the massacre suffered by Capt. Allan Wilson's force at the hands of the Ndbele at the Shagani River in 1895.)⁵⁶ The democratic nature of military scouting also raised complaints. It now seemed that any private, N.C.O., or even worse, civilian volunteer, could use his initiative and wits to fight the enemy, rather than simply remaining the traditional passive soldier in the ranks.

Pocock was also captivated by Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. This contributed to the establishment of the 'Imperial Legion of Frontiersmen' in 1905. They were to be photographed parading paramilitary style in Hyde Park, wearing open necked flannel shirts, neckerchiefs, high riding boots, gauntlets, slouch hats, bandoleers and revolvers. Such Edwardian notables as Edgar Wallace, Erskine Childers, Rider Haggard and William Le Queux came to be associated with the Legion, as well as Lord Lonsdale who was Pocock's original patron for the organization. It is unlikely that Baden-Powell could not have failed to have known about the Legion and this no doubt helped to reinforce the heroic image he held of the Frontiersman: the first page of *Scouting for Boys* reads: "These are the Frontiersmen... the trappers of North America, the hunters

of Central Africa... the Bushmen and Drovers of Australia, the Constabulary of North West Canada and of South Africa... ”⁵⁷

Although Pocock contributed to the first edition of *The Scout* newspaper, Baden-Powell was keen to play down the suggestion of the Legion having had any influence in the creation of the Boy Scouts. This may have been due to the rather flamboyant style of the Legionnaires, who seemed to actively encourage a rough devil-may-care attitude, taking pride in the nefarious activities of its members. For example, Legionnaire Charles Mason was said to have been active with Sun Yat-Sen in China and the London Commander of the Legion, Manuel De Herrera Hora (who claimed to be half Latin American, half Red Indian when his father was in fact a London chemists’ wholesaler) had to be removed from his position for “flogging a Legion bandmaster whilst on parade.”⁵⁸

Under Lieutenant Colonel ‘Paddy’ Driscoll (leader of the ‘Driscoll Scouts’ in the Boer War) the Legion gathered momentum, with Pocock compiling the popular *Frontiersman’s Pocket Book* in 1906 with contributions from among others, Francis Galton, Fred Selous and Sam Steele (hero of the Canadian North-West Mounted Police, South African Field Force and South African Constabulary), Fred Lindsay (the Australian ‘whip-expert’), and Captain E.S. Grogan (known to a generation of schoolboys as ‘Cape-to-Cairo Grogan’, the first man to walk the length of the African continent).⁵⁹ The Legion’s *Pocket Book* was to be a popular Woodcraft text, right through into the inter-war period.

The message of the Legion was clear: the *Frontiersman* was an unorthodox if invaluable type of soldier, unfit for ‘parade-ground’ soldiering,

but ideal for the defence of the Empire. Like Kipling's 'Legion of the Damned', they presented an image of men uncomfortable with the pleasantries and trivialities of life back home, itching instead for adventure under colonial skies. Their hearts yearned for the natural, rugged Open-Air life. Baden-Powell confessed to the habit of day-dreaming about life on the *veldt*, while having to make polite conversation at a dowager's tea-party.⁶⁰ Baden-Powell mused, "It beats me why any Briton continues to live in, say, Wigan, when South Africa is open to him."⁶¹ Rider Haggard, according to his biographer, only felt comfortable with a machete in his hand, rather than a tea-cup.⁶²

The British public therefore had a good idea of what a 'Scout' was before Baden-Powell launched his movement in 1908. Winston Churchill, like Baden-Powell, also served in South Africa, initially as a war correspondent and then with the South African Light Horse. His reports sent back to the British press helped to contribute to the aura of excitement that surrounded the Irregulars. Baden-Powell's only memoirs of the Matabele Campaign were eminently readable stories packed full of 'true life' anecdotes which were to surface twelve years later in *Scouting for Boys*.

As well as general public interest, progressive educationalists and youth workers were also becoming particularly interested in adapting military scouting for a juvenile, civilian audience. Baden-Powell's army text book *Aids to Scouting for NCOs and Men* was an instant best seller in 1899 and went on to appear in the curriculum of the educationalist Charlotte Mason at her 'House of Education' in the Lake district.⁶³ *Aids to Scouting* also attracted the interest of certain sections of the Boys' Brigade and was serialised in *Boys of the Empire* in 1900. Many youth groups and clubs were becoming increasingly keen on

‘scouting games’ too. For example, in Easter 1906 the Rucksack Club enjoyed “a great game” on Scafell Pike, when they divided themselves into ‘Scouts’ and ‘Outposts’ in order to seize the mountain ‘Fortress.’⁶⁴

Baden-Powell was also receiving attention from a number of headmasters in charge of the so called, new, progressive schools, such as Cecil Reddie at Abbotsholme School, J.H. Bradley at Bedales and Kurt Hahn at Gordonstoun, who wanted to provide a more liberal, flexible school regime, particularly in terms of leisure and sporting activities. There was a concerted effort to move beyond the obsession with team ball games that dominated the older public schools and which Baden-Powell also disapproved of. Nevertheless, there was still evidence of the same air of Spartanism that dominated the more traditional public schools. As one ‘Old Boy’ remembered:

First in my mind are the dormitories with every window open in all weathers... Water poured in to each little *sitz* bath under the open window before we got in to bed, and not infrequently in consequence, a slab of ice to remove the morning after... Our outdoor activities open up memories of garden leaves and work with spade and hoe, of that duty peculiar to Bedales, the weekly task-force detailed to clean the earth closets, of first enthusiasm for the week of hay-making rather subdued by later blisters and sun-baked fields.⁶⁵

Cecil Reddie, who was deeply influenced by the mystic socialist Edward Carpenter and the Fellowship of New Life, spoke for this new direction with its rural based education. The child should grow up in as natural environment as possible. There should be a more modern curriculum (emphasising modern languages, mathematics and science) the encouragement of individual expression via music, art, handicrafts and manual work, complemented by an improved diet, more ‘rational’ dress and as much fresh air as possible. At Bedales, one of the more unusual school clubs was taxidermy, alongside estate

and farm work.⁶⁶ Not surprisingly Abbotsholme and Bedales were soon to be running their own Scouting Troop by 1908.

These initiatives reflected wider European trends in 'new education'. Froebel's *Kindergarten* had underlined the importance of fresh air to the young child. Significantly, Madame Montessori had also located new methods of raising children within the context of the New Age: "The outcome... (will be) the New Child, a superior being, giving promise to a New Humanity, with powers of mind and spirit hitherto unsuspected."⁶⁷

Such trends were to continue in to the post-war period with 'Illuminated' bodies and personages, such as Rudolph Steiner and the Anthroposophical movement endowing new schools. The first Theosophical school at Letchworth had opened its doors in 1914, offering a vegetarian diet, handicrafts, mixed classes, Open-Air teaching, Dalcrozan Eurythmics and pupil self-government in the form of a 'moot'.⁶⁸ (Until 1930 it was affiliated with another famous progressive school, St. Christopher's, Letchworth, founded in 1906.) Its success inspired Beatrice Ensor, a school's inspector and founder of the Theosophical Fraternity of Education in 1915, to form the New Educational Fellowship with A.S. Neill in 1921. As Webb notes, its primary function was to "Prepare the child to seek and to realise in his own life the supremacy of the spirit."⁶⁹

The New Educational Fellowship were to maintain good relations with the Woodcraft movement, warmly supporting their new ventures in teaching children. As will be explored, The Kindred was committed to the ideal of an integrated education. The logic was simple: as Madame Montessori had indicated, the New Age could only come through the New Child. The cataclysm of the Great War had highlighted the need for the next generation to be "A

community of complete human beings... rounded individuals whose creativity, openness of mind and spiritual evolution would defeat the selfishness that had undoubtedly promoted the last war.”⁷⁰

The Kibbo Kift felt that, although one could not hurry the New Age along and that it would be a matter for gradual evolution, some form of human instrument and social involvement would still be needed in order to fulfil this expectation. Thus all eyes turned to Youth.

Footnotes for Chapter Two

¹ A.Bramwell, *Ecology in the Twentieth Century. A History* (London & New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), pp.80-81

² D.Watkin, *Morality and Architecture* (Oxford: 1977), p.54; cited in A.Bramwell, *Ecology in the Twentieth Century*, p. 81

³ J.Springhall, *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain 1860-1960* (Dublin: Gill Macmillan, 1986), p.27

⁴ Ibid; p.28

⁵ For discussion on the fears concerning juvenile delinquency see J. Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society* (London: Croom Helm, 1977) pp. 13-17; see also J. Springhall, *The Coming of Age* (Dublin: Gill Macmillan, 1986). Also, A. Warren, *Sport, Youth and Gender in Britain; 1880-1940* in eds. J.C. Binfield and J. Stevenson, *Sport, Culture and Politics* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), pp. 49-71. A. Warren, ‘Popular Manliness: Baden-Powell, Scouting and the Development of a Manly Character’ in eds. J. A. Mangan and J. Walvin, *Manliness and Morality: Middle Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), pp. 199-219. See also G. Pearson: *Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears* (London:1983); V. Bailey, *Delinquency and Citizenship: Reclaiming the Young Offender, 1914-1981* (Oxford; 1987)

⁶ See G. Searle, *The Quest For National Efficiency* (London: Blackwell, 1971), G. Searle: ‘The Revolt from the Right in Edwardian Britain’, in eds. Paul Kennedy and Arthany Nicholls, *Nationalist and Racist Movements in Britain and Germany before 1914* (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 21-37

⁷ G. Searle, ‘The Revolt from the Right in Edwardian Britain’, pp. 21-37. See also G. D. Phillips: *The Die Hards* (New York: Harvard University Press, 1979)

⁸ G.Searle, ‘The Revolt from the Right in Edwardian Britain’), p.27

⁹As Anne Summers noted, paranoia about an expected German invasion reached extraordinary levels in the first decade of the twentieth century. Anne Summers, 'The Character of Edwardian Nationalism', in P. Kennedy and A. Nicholls, *Nationalist and Racist Movements in Britain and Germany before 1914* (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 21-37

¹⁰ R.Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys* (London: Horace Cox, 1908), Pt. 6, p.336

¹¹ Ibid., Part 4, p.315

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., pp.331-332

¹⁴ J.Webb, *The Occult Establishment* (Illinois: Open Court,1976), p.86

¹⁵ Interview with Diana Hargrave, London, (3-11-94)

¹⁶ See Tim Jeal, *Baden-Powell* (London:Hutchinson,1989), esp. chapters 6,8,9&10

¹⁷ Speech by Baden-Powell at the Waldorf Astoria 23rd. Sept. 1910; cited in T.Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, p.421

¹⁸ Stephen Graham saw the Scout and Guide movement as essentially liberating in that, "it helps boys and girls out the rut of village life, starts them moving, and once set going, many of them keep moving all their lives and never once stagnate." See, S.Graham, *The Gentle Art of Tramping* (London: Richard Holden &Co.,1927), pp.85-86

¹⁹ R.Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, Pt.3, pp.172-173

²⁰ Maurice Hewlett, *The Forest Lovers* (London:1898 edn.), p.240; cited in D.Jarrett, *The Sleep of Reason* (London: Wiedenfeld & Nicholson,1988), p.137

²¹ T.Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, p.353

²² D.Jarrett, *The Sleep of Reason*, p. 131

²³ R.Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, Pt.1, pp.56-57

²⁴ T.Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, p.421

²⁵ D.Jarrett, *The Sleep of Reason*, pp.131-131

²⁶ Aside from Baden-Powell, other contemporary 'experts' on so-called "Boy Nature" included: H. S. Pelham; *The Training of a Working Boy* (London: Macmillan, 1914); C. Russell: *Manchester Lads: Sketches of Manchester Lads at Work and Play* (Manchester University Press, 1905). See also M. Rosenthal, *The Character Factory*, pp. 88-107. For a discussion on adolescence see J. Springhall, *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain 1860-1960* (Dublin: Gill Macmillan, 1986). See also A. Warren, 'Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the Scout Movement and Citizen Training in Britain, 1900-1920', *English Historical Review* 101.399 (April 1986), pp. 376-398. It is unlikely but unclear whether Baden-Powell ever read G. Stanley Hall's classic, *Adolescence* (New York: Appleton, 1904)

²⁷ Leslie Paul, *Angry Young Man* (London: Faber & Faber,1952), p.51

²⁸ T.Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, p.415

²⁹ 'Captain Noemo', *The Boy Scout Bubble: A Review of a Great Futility*, (London: 1912), pp.25-27; cited in T.Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, p.416

³⁰ For excellent histories of the wider Youth movement, see J. Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements, 1883-1940* (London: Croom Helm, 1977) and *Sure and Steadfast: A History of the Boys' Brigade* (London: Croom Helm 1983); D. L. Prynne, "The Soldier Sunday Schools, the Woodcraft Folk and Allied Movements: Their Moral Influence on the British Labour Movement Since the 1890s" (Sheffield: M.A. Thesis, University of Sheffield, 1971); P. Wilkinson: "English Youth Movements 1908-1930", in *Journal of Contemporary History*. Volume 4., no.2, April 1969. Older, but still useful, is Austin Birch: *The Story of the Boys' Brigade* (London:1959)

³¹ See R.Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, Pt.4, pp.213, 241, 256

³² Cited in T.Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, p.423

³³ Cited in T. Jeal, *Baden –Powell* (London: Hutchinson, 1989) p.177, pp. 187-190 and p. 423

³⁴ R. MacDonald, R. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: the Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement* (Toronto: Toronto University Press,1993), p.71

³⁵ See Baden-Powell, *The Matabele Campaign* (London: Methuen, 1896)

³⁶ R. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: the Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement* (Toronto: Toronto University Press,1993), p.71

³⁷ See Baden-Powell, *Aids To Scouting* (London: Gale & Polden, 1899) and also R. MacDonald *Sons of the Empire*, pp. 71-74

³⁸ R. MacDonald *Sons of the Empire* p. 72

³⁹ See, for example, R.Baden-Powell, *Aids to Scouting*, (London: Gale and Polden Ltd.,1899), p.65; R.Baden-Powell, *The Matabele Campaign* (London: 1896; this edn; London: Methuen,1901), p.121; R.Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, Pt.2, pp.76-79

⁴⁰ Cited in P. Howarth *Play Up and Play the Game* (London: Eyre Methuen,1973), p.110

⁴¹ Jarrett tells of the popularity of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* when it was first published and of the scenes at Westminster in the summer of 1883 when such notables as Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Gladstone were desperately seeking their own copies. See D.Jarrett, *The Sleep of Reason*, p.131

⁴² Ibid., p. 131. Jarrett also notes the response of William James, the American philosopher, who criticised the "nerveless sentimentalist and dreamer" that comes from "excessive book-reading." He also highlights the opposition to public libraries on account of them being full of "loafing office boys or clerks, who were using their masters' time for devouring all the most trivial literary trash that they can get." See Ibid., p.132

⁴³ See R. Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New haven and London: Yale University press, 1967)

⁴⁴ Baden-Powell viewed Buffalo Bill's 'Wild West Show' in 1887, and was so inspired that he volunteered to organise a military tattoo in Liverpool along similar swashbuckling lines. See Tim Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, pp. 127-188 and R. MacDonald, p.63; William Cody: *Life and Adventures of 'Buffalo Bill'* (Chicago: Stanton, 1917)

⁴⁵ Adolf Hitler remained an ardent fan of Karl May's books, claiming, in 1942, that May had "opened... (his)...eyes to the nature of the world." During his early months as Chancellor, Hitler re-read all of May's seventy-odd volumes. See J.Fest, *Hitler* (London; Wiedenfeld and Nicholson,1974; this edn; London: Penguin Books, 1977), pp.663, 1127

⁴⁶ T.Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, p.188

⁴⁷ R.Baden-Powell, *The Matabele Campaign*, p.120

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.121

⁴⁹ R.MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire*, pp.67-68, 82

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.71

⁵¹ Ibid., p.76

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ D.Jarrett, *The Sleep of Reason*, p.173

⁵⁴ R.MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire*, p.80

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.81

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.67

⁵⁷ R.Baden-Powell, *Scouting For Boys*, Pt.1, p. 11.

⁵⁸ R.MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire*, p.55

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 56-57

⁶⁰ R.Baden-Powell, *The Matabele Campaign*, p.83

⁶¹ Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (London:1980), p.286

⁶² Cited in Howarth's *Play Up and Play the Game*, pp. 110-112. Howarth also draws attention to 'Reginald' the hero of P.C. Wren's *Wages of Virtue* (London:1913), who has aspirations to follow adventurous life on the Imperial Frontier: "What Reginald, like his father, loathed and feared was Modern Society life, and , in fact, all civilised life as it had presented itself to his eyes - with its incredibly false standards, values and ideals, its shoddy shams and vulgar pretences, its fat indulgences, slothfulness and folly;" *ibid*; p.122

⁶³ T.Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, p.382. Jeal notes that H.H. Allenby, later Fieldmarshall Viscount Allenby, had his son Maurice instructed in the art of military scouting by his governess Katrina Loveday, herself a former student under Charlotte Mason. This often led to Allenby being ambushed by Maurice and Miss Loveday, who would hide in trees and drop from overhanging branches.

⁶⁴ J. Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes, 1870-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), p.59

⁶⁵ J.Marsh, *Back to the Land* (London; Quartet Books, 1982), p. 217

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.216.

⁶⁷ J.Webb, *The Occult Establishment*, p. 403

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.405

Ibid.

⁶⁹ Washington, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1993), p.227

PART B

CHAPTER ONE: THE COMING OF THE KINDRED

1. The Woodcraft of Black Wolf

The genesis of Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts and its rapid success is well known: Baden-Powell was conscious of the widespread popular interest in his military career as well as in his expositions on the value of military scouting. His status had been confirmed owing to the 217 days he held Mafeking against the Boers using cunning, guile, 'pluck' and raw courage, and his legend was reinforced by such understated dispatches as: "Four hours bombardment. One dog killed. Baden-Powell."¹

He himself had been impressed by the Boys' Brigade Rally in 1903 and had suggested to the Brigade's founder, William Smith, that more games and activities could be included in the Brigade's training methods. However, Baden-Powell himself also began to devise plans for a training system that would instil leadership, good citizenship and healthiness (both moral and physical) into British boys. Baden-Powell found a patron in the publisher C. Arthur Pearson who also shrewdly saw the commercial prospects within such a scheme. A draft plan was written while Baden-Powell was inspecting the cavalry in Egypt in 1907, under the title 'Boys' Patrols'. After returning home, plans continued, and then the first practical experiments were undertaken on Brownsea Island off the Dorset coast. In August 1907, Baden-Powell took a group of around 20 boys on camp there, to test the viability of his ideas. Convinced of its potential, Baden-Powell was provided with a small office by Pearson and enough financial

backing to produce the weekly paper *The Scout*. Shortly afterwards *Scouting for Boys* was to be published by Pearson's in six fortnightly parts.

The success of Scouting and the rapid growth in members led, by 1909, to the need for larger offices. The official list of Scoutmasters contained over 400 names by the end of that year. Scouting was also proving popular abroad in the Dominions, the United States, as well as many areas of Europe. At the end of two whirlwind years, the British Scouting Association had registered 60,000 boys. This figure was to double within the space of a year and to keep on rising.

Baden-Powell was well aware that he was not the only person interested in Youth organisation and on a number of occasions he referred to himself as a mere 'uncle' of the new Youth movement: the real 'fathers' were William Smith of the Boys' Brigade, the American Daniel Beard of the 'Sons of Daniel Boone' and later the 'Boy Pioneers' and the British-born Canadian naturalist and artist Ernest Thompson Seton.

In 1906, Baden-Powell had received by post a copy of *The Birch-Bark Roll of the Woodcraft Indians*, sent by Seton who, unbeknown to Baden-Powell, had been devising a similar scheme for the training of boys and adolescents. Seton also emphasised the importance of the Open-Air life, camping, nature-lore, but his ethos involved, most controversially, an intense admiration for the 'Red Indian'. The unfortunate timing of these two schemes led to ugly accusations of plagiarism on the part of Seton against Baden-Powell.² Nevertheless, Seton's imaginative ideas were to have a profound impact on Baden-Powell, as they also to have on Hargrave.

Seton's family background lay in South Shields, which was abandoned in the 1860s in favour of a new life in Canada. A sensitive, awkward youth,

Ernest spent his formative years in Manitoba before studying art in Paris and London, specialising in the natural world. He was later to take up residence in the United States, but only took up American citizenship in 1931 at the age of seventy-one. Field trips to the frontier territories of Canada and the western United States in the 1880s and 1890s equipped him with a profound knowledge of the natural world and the indigenous peoples of those lands. Through his work as a nature-artist and ornithologist, Seton became an expert in the science of Woodcraft long before he considered its application in the upbringing of children, yet he did begin to write nature stories for children. These were highly popular both in the USA and in Britain, influencing a future generation of naturalists such as Sir Peter Scott and France Pitt.³

Just as Baden-Powell had admired the Matabele and the Zulu, so Seton sought to learn the skills of the North American Indians, not in order to fight them better, but for what they might teach the 'White Man' about the deficiencies of the modern, industrial world. Despite the acknowledgement that the Red Indian was a nomadic Hunter-Gatherer, he was almost always portrayed as a 'timeless' a-historical character: simple, unspoilt and profound. Such an image proved especially appealing to the 'Illuminated' with Spiritualists from the middle of the nineteenth century invariably 'channelling' Red Indian spirits in their quest to communicate with other worlds. This was to continue into the twentieth century, with Conan Doyle apparently connecting with an Indian spirit 'Black Hawk' via a Welsh medium in September 1919.⁴

Seton viewed the Red Indian as the foremost expert in the art of Woodcraft complete with extraordinary resources of health, strength, natural intuition and 'spiritual wisdom'. His interest in the pantheistic religions of the

Indian cultures was reinforced when he was informed by a Mohawk princess that he himself was in fact the reincarnation of a 'wolf spirit'.⁵ Seton maintained he enjoyed a natural affinity for the wolf as 'nature's outsider' and he also won acclaim for his paintings of timber wolves.⁶ Seton went on to adopt the Woodcraft name of 'Black Wolf' and used a lupine paw-print as his personal totem. Seton also found inspiration in another Native American, Charles Eastman (otherwise known as 'Ohiyesa' of the Minnesota Sioux) and author of *The Soul of an Indian*, a book readily devoured by Open-Air circles on both sides of the Atlantic.

In 1903 Seton published *Two Little Savages*, a quasi-autobiographical novel, in which an unloved child rejects his family's stern Presbyterian background and finds happiness in organising a group of boys into an 'Indian Tribe' and learning how to 'play Injun'. It seems that Seton himself had, as an adolescent, formed a 'Robin Hood' gang in Toronto in the 1870s. However, he drew more heavily on his experiences over the previous couple of years when he had stumbled across the idea, quite by accident, of inducting boys into Red Indian culture. In 1900 he had bought an estate in Connecticut with a view to establishing a wildlife sanctuary. Before long, he discovered that local youths were clambering over the fences and running amok in the woods. Rather than initiating a campaign of retribution on account of the damage to his property, he extended an invitation to the boys to stay over in the woods for a weekend camp that he would set about organising. This was accepted and around sixty participants turned up.

Seton's natural affinity for communicating with children led to the successful weekend of demonstrations of Woodcraft skills and talks on the

philosophy of the Red Indian. Out of this camp sprang the 'Senewauk Tribe', the first chapter of the 'Woodcraft Indians', or 'Seton's Indians' as they became known. Each boy 'earned' a Woodcraft name and a 'badge system' was devised for personal achievements and skills, alongside a voting system that provided self-government for the 'Indians'. The boys elected their own 'Elders' onto a 'Council'. Seton reserved for himself an advisory role as 'Medicine Man'.

Much of Seton's thinking was based on G. Stanley Hall's theory of 'Recapitulation'; he in turn had been influenced by Ernst Haeckel, who was to gather much support from child psychologists both in the United States and Europe. Hall's theory maintained that the educational development of the child mirrored the evolutionary development of the human race. The progressive stages of human evolution were replicated as 'primitive inborn instincts' in children and adolescents. For example, as Brian Morris more recently explained: "From ten to fourteen, corresponding to a period in history when primitive man discovered fire and the value of co-operation, and initially formed himself into clans, the gang instinct is predominant."⁷

Thus a boy's 'natural' love of colour, ritual, secret codes, symbols and tests of bravery was to be explained 'scientifically'. Accordingly, a child's fondness for collecting and swapping stamps, coins, etc., was said to be a 'recapitulation' of the growth of barter, trade and commerce. Such ideas found widespread support among New Age and progressive circles. Hargrave was to cite the Indian poet, mystic and land reformer Rabindranath Tagore, who also suggested that, "men should have some limited period of their lives specially reserved for the life of primitive man."⁸ The following educational application of Hall's theory and Seton's methods by Woodcrafters in the 1920s was typical:

The complete education means the living over again by the individual of the experiences passed through by his ancestors. As man's progenitors inhabited fruit-producing regions along with other animals, so his children should begin life in an orchard-garden along with pet animals, whether wild or domesticated – the ensemble being as like as may be to the traditional Garden of Eden, and to the reconciliation with the animal world described in Isaiah XI. When the time comes for them to break out of this garden, they will proceed to lay a solid foundation of Paleolithic culture by betaking themselves under adult guidance to some suitable cave or rock-shelter, whence issuing forth they will hunt for wild foods, get to know the ways of the wild creatures of the woods, and otherwise reproduce the life of that period.⁹

Seton's Woodcraft allowed boys to explore their inherent Paleolithic and Neolithic tendencies that were a natural part of every person's psychological make-up. 'Gangs', so often the focus of adult fears concerning delinquency and rowdiness, came to be seen as creative, positive phenomena. With a good leadership and a little gentle instruction in the right direction, the gang (or tribe) could provide an education for the boy, teaching the laws of nature and health, duty, respect and comradeship.

Seton was not a systematic or scholarly investigator of the various Native American cultures. Rather he romantically and freely borrowed some ideas and practices, mixed them with others and discarded the rest. His efforts produced a heady pot-pourri of Red Indianism - positive, reassuring and free from anything 'unpleasant' or controversial. Meanwhile, his practical experiments in youth work were to be first expressed in the pages of *The Ladies Home Journal* in May 1902. Enthusiasm for the scheme grew so that by 1903 a further fifty Tribes had been established, each using the Senewauk Tribe as their model. This necessitated the founding of the League of Woodcraft Indians and the publication of a Constitution.

Seton returned to England in 1904, ostensibly to promote children's titles, but also to test the waters with his Woodcraft ideas. After meeting with

Kipling and C.B. Fry, the celebrated English cricketer, a handful of tribes were initiated but Fry warned that “more discipline” would be needed if the Woodcraft Indians were to take off in England.¹⁰ 1906 saw Seton in England again, this time with the express wish of enlisting Baden-Powell. Their lunch together at the Savoy on 30th October was to lead to a whole series of claims and counter-claims as to what had actually been said by whom. It seems that Baden-Powell promised Seton help with revising the campcraft section of the next edition of *The Birch Bark Roll*. In exchange Seton apparently granted Baden-Powell liberty to utilise some of his camp games for use with ‘an organisation’ for boys that Baden-Powell was contemplating beginning.¹¹ This would seem to deflate Seton’s later claim that Baden-Powell agreed to work for him in establishing the Woodcraft Indians more firmly in England. It also seems that Baden-Powell shrewdly saw the error in restricting an organisation for boys to just one cultural model or racial type. This would unnecessarily limit the appeal of such a venture. The difference between Baden-Powell’s Woodcraft and that of Seton was that the Boy Scouts did not just rely on ‘Red Indianism’ for inspiration. Unfortunately for Seton, despite the promising beginnings of the Woodcraft Indians in the United States, Americans proved to be too ‘racially conscious’. As one publisher told Seton: “There are too many Americans who think of Indians as dirty and loafing degenerates or as savages to make the idea popular when they think of educating their children.”¹²

After 1908 the Woodcraft Indians were eventually overtaken by the Boy Scout tidal wave that was approaching the United States from England. The disgruntled Seton was given the honorary title of ‘Chief Scout of America’. But he was soon quarrelling with the executive and his growing socialist and pacifist

convictions further contributed to his isolation within the American leadership. He resigned in 1915 to re-establish his Woodcraft Indians, who remained defiant and independent in the face of the American Scouting behemoth. In 1912 Seton had published his *Book of Woodcraft and Indian Lore*, which provided a clear perspective on the philosophical differences between his approach and that of Baden-Powell's. The latter saw Woodcraft as essentially a means to an end, a way of inculcating citizenship and initiative, as well as building health, for the sake of the nation or empire. Seton, however, saw Woodcraft as a system of human regeneration, a method of personal and social renewal: "My aim was to make a man, Baden-Powell's was to make a soldier."¹³

Seton provides an important chapter to the understanding of the origins of the Kibbo Kift. He failed in his attempt to transfer the Woodcraft Indians to Britain, which only resulted in his Red Indian Woodcraft being apparently 'swallowed up' by Baden-Powell, although the advent of war in Europe, and the ensuing jingoism and militarism of the British Boy Scouts, re-kindled the embers of Seton's ideas. The seeds of rebellion were stirring in the belly of the great fish. It took the Great War and its aftermath for the Boy Scouts to spit out these troublesome elements who were retreating to the forests to re-read *The Birch Bark Roll* once again.

2. The Woodcraft Rebellion

In 1915, the year Seton retired from the Boy Scouts of America, a group of Cambridge University Scoutmasters, unhappy with the now overriding militarism of the Boy Scouts, withdrew from the organisation. These rebels, led by a medical student Aubrey Westlake who had earned the Woodcraft name,

‘Golden Eagle’, pledged themselves to return to the spirit of Setonian Woodcraft. With the aid of his father, the respected geologist and anthropologist Dr. Ernest Westlake, they set about the establishment of the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry in 1916. Rather less ambitious than its name, the Order simply adopted the shield of St. George as its emblem. Seton was recognised as being the inspiration behind the movement and was made Honorary Grand Chieftain.¹

The Westlakes, like the Hargrave family, were of Quaker stock and the Order received favourable attention from the Society of Friends and other non-conformist bodies, especially in recognition of the work carried out by the Order among Belgian refugee children. A school in southern France had been successfully run along Woodcraft lines for 600 refugees during the latter half of the war. After the Armistice, the Belgian authorities invited a number of youth workers back to Liege, in order to train Belgian teachers and facilitate the continuing work among the children. The Order also had strong links with Sidcot School in Somerset. Furthermore, the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry set about developing its adult work with the evolution of an elaborate and colourful ‘tribal’ ceremony and Woodcraft training. Members of the Order would salute each other with the right arm raised in the Roman fashion (a gesture that was to become common in all Woodcraft circles), and offer the greeting: ‘Blue Sky!’

Despite his Quaker upbringing, Ernest believed that the ultimate end of Woodcraft training was, essentially, a mystical one; to reveal mankind’s ‘natural’ primitive religion: “in order to become spiritual one must become natural.”² Not surprisingly, such sentiments, along with Ernest’s frequent invocation of Pan and Dionysus and the fact that people such as Victor Neuberg (a disciple of Aleister Crowley) were to be found contributing to the Order of

Woodcraft Chivalry's publications, led to a cooling of relations with the Society of Friends. Ernest, who had studied biology under T.H.Huxley and had been made a Fellow of both the Geological Society and the Royal Anthropological Institute, was killed in a car accident in 1922. He was buried with full Order of Woodcraft Chivalry honours at the Order's campsite at Godshill in the New Forest. His patriarchal influence was sorely missed. His mantle now passed to his son, Aubrey, recently qualified as a physician at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, who rallied the Order and continued the work of developing a 'Forest School' at Godshill, where recapitulation exercises could be indulged in. Yet the Order failed to become anything more than ethereal and introspective. As Springhall notes: "The appeal of the Order was based less on practical politics than on a utopian search for individual freedom through the open air life of poetry, adventure and play."³

One figure who appeared on the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry's 'Council of Guidance' in 1919, but who maintained a cool distance from the organisation, was John Hargrave. White Fox had by this point risen up through the ranks of the Scouting movement and was now viewed by Baden-Powell himself as a very capable and gifted young man. In 1917 Hargrave was elevated into the Scouting hierarchy with his appointment as Commissioner for Woodcraft and Scouting. White Fox had impressed Baden-Powell with his popular expositions on Woodcraft culture: *Lonecraft* (1913) and *The Wigwam Papers* (1916), which were followed by *The Totem Talks* (1918), *Tribal Training* (1919) and *The Boy's Book of Signs and Symbols* (1920). These books mainly consisted of chatty, informal essays and practical exercises, illustrated by the author. Hargrave was also reaching the large Scouting audience as a regular columnist

for *The Trail* and *The Scout* magazines. However his main income was being provided through his work as a commercial artist. After a number of commissions from Thomas Nelson & Sons, he had been appointed Chief Cartoonist for the *London Evening News* in 1911, at the tender age of seventeen. Pearson's, Baden-Powell's publishers, also spotted him and offered him a position, early in 1914, as Staff Artist at Scout Headquarters.

War intervened and despite Hargrave's nominal Quaker faith (and much to his own surprise) he enlisted immediately in the Royal Army Medical Corps., Irish Division. (As Hargrave later reflected: "Why did I join the Medical Corps? Why did I join the Army? Why did I want to go to war? I must have been bloody-well barmey!")⁴ A series of upbeat articles was sent to the editor of *The Scout* entitled '*White Fox on the Warpath*,' (even citing *Aids to Scouting* and Frederick Burnham) but the reality of training, carried out in Ireland, was desperate: a shortage of adequate equipment, supplies and clothing, led locals in County Limerick to call them 'Kitchener's Rag-Bag Army'. Hargrave resorted to wearing his Scouting uniform and became known as 'Kitchener's Cowboy'.⁵ Hargrave recalled: "Born and bred in a studio, brought up among the cloud-swept mountains of Westmoreland, amid the purple heather and the sunrise in the peat-moss puddles, barrack-life soon became like penal servitude."⁶ Yet the rain and cold of Limerick were to be a blessed memory in contrast to the Division's destination: on 11th July 1915 they sailed for the Dardenelles.

The Army brought some small compensations for Hargrave. It allowed him, for example, to travel abroad for the first time and to briefly taste the exotic East. The troop-ship stopped over at Malta and Alexandria before sailing onto the Greek island of Lemnos, the mustering point for the Allied invasion of

Turkey. Hargrave had made friends with a Boer War veteran, simply referred to as 'Hawk', who had also seen service as a despatch rider in India. White Fox came to be bedazzled by Hawk's tales of "fakirs and jugglers, monkey temples and sacred bulls..."⁷

Hargrave's Division landed on the salt flats of Suvla Bay, just north of Gallipoli and thus began a hellish two-month struggle for survival. Hargrave, as an N.C.O. stretcher-bearer, simply wrote to *The Scout*: "The sights I have seen during the last few days are too awful to bear description." When they evacuated on 30th September 1915, only 6,000 of the original force of 25,000 who landed remained.⁸ The appalling conditions, the back-breaking stretcher work and the constant mental strain, took its toll on Hargrave. After a brief spell on the Salonika front, he was invalided out of the Army and sent home, racked with sand-fly fever, a 'strained heart', jaundice and dysentery. On his return, the beech woods above Latimer beckoned and White Fox retired to a solitary camp. There he sought to 'cleanse' himself of the horrors of the war and the "mental mechanisation of Army life... In a few weeks, sunlight, the open air, doing nothing, being alone, had done what no hospital could do. I was fit and in good fettle, the heart beating in rhythm again."⁹

Over the next three years Hargrave was to periodically retire to the same woods. He chose to sleep in a lightweight Egyptian cotton 'A-tent' while using a Romany *vardo*, painted in the 'tribal' colours of green and orange, as an office, art-studio and kitchen. He had resumed his contract with Pearson's and the Scouting press, but he was also keen to work on his own projects and ideas. Among the vast array of books and literature, mostly on anthropology, religion and the occult, that Hargrave took with him to study during his recuperation,

was the autobiography of Joseph Knowles, a New England artist and nature-writer. Knowles achieved widespread, but short-lived fame, in America in 1913 when he decided to demonstrate the 'elemental' truths about the nation's relationship with the Wilderness. He accepted a challenge to literally walk naked into the woods of Maine and to live there, unassisted, for a period of two months. On 4th August at 10:00 am, with a gentle drizzle falling, Knowles finished his last cigarette, stripped entirely and cantered off into the forest leaving behind an assorted group of friends, reporters and sceptics. He was to emerge nearly three months later near the Canadian border, clad in the skin of a 200lb. black bear he had trapped, and deer-skin chaps from a buck he had killed with his bare hands. (The Maine Game authorities did not take this kindly and fined him \$250 for "hunting out of season".) ¹⁰

His exploits made him a national hero, despite the queries of some who doubted his account of how he had survived. However, Knowles had had some experience of 'Backwoodsmanship' before, being acquainted with Sioux and Chippewa Indians on his travels in Michigan. Yet as Knowles knew full well, true Woodcraft was not just about survival, but about 'regeneration'. While he admitted that his adventure had not been a "wonderfully romantic" one and that he found the mental strain more taxing than the physical, he spoke of being "literally reborn" in the woods.¹¹ Doctors from Harvard University examined him and remarked on his health; he had shed 11lbs. in excess fat, yet gained in muscle bulk, and had also, grown 1/10 of an inch in height.¹² The experience marked the "beginning of a new life" for Knowles, with him attacking the decadent luxury of modern civilisation and its artificial existence which destroys health and true happiness. Knowles in the woods had 'reverted' to eating when

hungry and sleeping when tired, thus 'subverting' social standards. The exploit had also opened up a strong pantheistic vein within Knowles:

To me there is not only an education within nature but a religion as well. My God is in the wilderness. The great open book of nature is my religion. My Church is the church of the forest. I am convinced that he who lives close to the teachings of nature lives closer to the God of creation than those of the civilised life who wrangle over the different doctrines handed down from one people to another.¹³

Knowles went on to endorse the teachings and activities of both Seton and Baden-Powell who were, "leading the people back to nature."¹⁴ Hargrave was, however, increasingly sceptical as to this last claim: to White Fox, the Boy Scout movement was in danger of losing the central Woodcraft component which lay at the heart of Scouting. Under the impact of the Great War, the original romance of Baden-Powell's venture had been dispersed, leaving a jingoistic, militaristic organisation turning out future soldiers for the front-line. Hargrave had always objected to the 'bugle-blowing' and drilling tendencies which existed within the Scouts, but with his return from the War, he saw the organisation being taken over by such elements. According to White Fox: "The Backwoodsmanship had gone. In its place are found the curate, the squire, and Major Toothbrush. The boy had been taken out in to the woods by his Wicked Uncles, folded in the Union Jack and smothered."¹⁵

Springhall agrees, suggesting that, "the 1914-18 war gave the paramilitarists who were in control of the English youth movements, a chance to come out into the open, after years of disguising their aims beneath the superficial veneer of 'woodcraft' or 'religion'."¹⁶ Hargrave's experiences in the Army had already reinforced his prejudices against the military. While he criticised senior officers for their incompetence, his exasperation at the plight of newly commissioned officers, unable to read a compass, a map or find the Pole

Star was more sympathetic. Hargrave's Woodcraft skills undoubtedly contributed to his survival at Suvla Bay: it was the soldier, little used to camouflage, unable to keep still and remain silent who fell prey to the Turkish snipers.¹⁷

Hargrave's reservations about the Scouts led him cautiously to lay the foundations of a movement that would seek to restore the Woodcraft element within the Scouts, through galvanising the most reliable of them within the organisation. However he also began the process of elevating English Woodcraft into a higher universal social and philosophical realm. Woodcraft was going to be the path leading to mankind and society's renewal. In July 1917 White Fox set out the task ahead. The need was to build a 'New Race of Scout Men' who were to be "the beginning of a new off-shoot of evolution... Man is the highest type of animal evolved – and is going to evolve even higher by Scouting and Woodcraft."¹⁸

July 1917 was also to see the establishment of a weekend 'Woodcraft Instruction Camp for Scoutmasters, Patrol Leaders and Seconds.' Mark Drakeford remarks on the serious and earnest atmosphere that surrounded the camp. There were seminars on 'The Psychology of Scouting', 'The Ethics of Scouting' and 'The Future of Scouting', which indicated to the young men gathered there, that they were in the presence of a man who could offer them the chance of being part of a great adventure about to unfold. ¹⁹ White Fox told them that they were to be the pioneers of a 'new way of life':

I prophesy that in time a boy who is not a Scout and who has never been one, will be looked upon as an oddity and a freak. I prophesy that a great body or brotherhood of MEN SCOUTS will gather together 'after the war', training themselves in usefulness and hardihood in order to maintain at its best the strength and health of the Empire.²⁰

The mention of 'Empire' is problematic: two days before this passage was published, Hargrave had been appointed Commissioner for Woodcraft and Camping by Baden-Powell and therefore, he had to maintain a balance between carving out a Woodcraft constituency and toeing the official Scouting war-time line. In April his column for *The Scout* had cocked a snook at the militarists: "My own camp shirt is fringed and has my totem sign and the sign for 'Peace' worked on it". However back in January 1917, Hargrave had written:

We of the Scout Brotherhood are not imitation soldiers. When the time comes - and we are old enough - we will join the Army and serve our King and Country. The May 1918 edition saw Hargrave produce: "Rear Rank Stand Firm" which asked, "What have I done for you, England! - My England!

Such sentiments were to haunt Hargrave in 1920 in the coming row over White Fox's position in the movement and his anti-militarist policy, which exposed him to accusations of gross hypocrisy.²¹

Nevertheless Hargrave was continuing to use his position within the movement for the purposes of reinforcing the Woodcraft element of Scouting. He could afford to feel proud of his work when, in 1918 he reviewed the previous years' efforts. In January 1918 he announced the creation of a 'Woodcraft Roll' which was to record the names of all "registered Troops, Patrols, Lone Scouts, Old Scouts, or Senior Scouts who are taking up, and working on the outdoor Woodcraft Tribal System."²² Hargrave was attempting to gauge the strength of feeling nation-wide and giving official sanction and weight to Woodcraft. For many months he had been receiving numerous letters and reports from various 'woodcrafty' Scout Troops up and down the country. The 1st Conway Scout Troop, North Wales, for example, took White Fox very seriously. Under the leadership of their Scoutmaster, 'Grey Fox', they developed a Red-Indian style of Scouting and used a ruined farmhouse in Snowdonia as

their Tribal camp. Troop member 'Lone Wolf' (Russell Jones) recalled that at the time White Fox appeared to them as "a great man", although in 1921 'Lone Wolf' felt an overriding loyalty to the Scouts and declined to join the Kibbo Kift.²³ Hargrave had also convened a meeting in London in 1917 which was particularly well attended by representatives from Lancashire and Cheshire Woodcraft groups, aided by the capable Manchester Scoutmaster 'Little Elk' (C.N.Fallas). White Fox was also receiving an increasing number of personal visits to his 'Caravan Camp' at Chesham Bois, such as 'Lone Moose', a cycle-camper who peddled from Belfast to meet Hargrave.

White Fox's standing within the movement was now at an all-time high. He was made an Honorary Scoutmaster of Poplar, he also became involved with the Camelot Club, an East End boys' settlement under the guidance of 'Seonee Wolf' (Dr. C.S.Cullen) and the then Mayor of Stepney Clement Attlee. Hargrave was appointed as Scouting Commissioner for the South-West Hertfordshire Region. For Baden-Powell, Hargrave was both a valuable asset as well as a potential source of disruption. The best course of action would therefore be, "assimilation through promotion."²⁴ As Jeal notes, Baden-Powell placed great faith in Hargrave when he appointed him Commissioner, overlooking his relative youth, his lack of a public school education, and his 'ultra-views', yet by 1918, Baden-Powell was having serious misgivings.²⁵ Hargrave had always stressed Scouting's need for outdoor space, campsites and woodland for recreational use and training. In April 1918 Hargrave wrote to Baden-Powell, urging him that that only way Woodcraft would develop would be via, "buying up chunks of nature and form(ing) open-air training schools."²⁶ Epping Forest, with its close proximity to London, seemed a likely area to

Hargrave and towards the end of 1918 Gilwell Park, a run-down eighteenth century house with 50 acres of land, was discovered and purchased for the movement.

As Commissioner for Scouting and Woodcraft, Hargrave believed that Gilwell Park now came under his remit. However Baden-Powell wanted Gilwell to eventually supersede the Scouts London Headquarters and was becoming increasingly worried as to Hargrave's suitability for such a sensitive post. In February 1919 Hargrave was informed that he would not be required as 'Camp Chief' at Gilwell. Hargrave felt this was a deliberate move by the conservative Scouting establishment to curb his influence, so he began to fight back, using *The Trail*, an independent and supposedly more progressive Scouting newspaper, as the platform for his riposte: "Woodcraft is a teaching – a philosophy – a practical Spartan training. Woodcraft is the root of all Scouting, because it is based upon the laws of the Great Spirit of Nature. Woodcraft is health of mind, body and spirit. Woodcraft is hard work and happiness. Woodcraft is life itself."²⁷ White Fox went on to warn that the Scouts were in danger of losing their Woodcraft heritage, of dwindling into a "huge over-organised boy's club dressed in shirts, shorts and a cowboy's hat."²⁸

Yet White Fox was to deny any attempt at preparing a new movement, or readying an Order of Woodcraft Chivalry style secession from within the Scouts. To those who pointed to the evidence of the Woodcraft Roll as the basis for some form of new organisation, Hargrave replied that the Roll was merely to keep like-minded people in touch and informed: "There is no need for more new movements while the Scout movement is clamouring and thirsting for the call of the wild and the lure of the campfire."²⁹

Indeed, 'organisation' itself was antithetical to the Woodcraft ethos: "Woodcrafters have no headquarters, no red tape, and no committee meetings, they just get to work and DO IT."³⁰ White Fox was also keen to stress that Woodcraft was the 'original impulse' behind Scouting, therefore he could not by definition be a 'rebel'. In this he constantly stressed his loyalty to Baden-Powell who he described as, "one of the Old Wolves who (was) not afraid of bare knees."³¹ He would use quotes from Baden-Powell or *Scouting For Boys* ("a revolutionary handbook") as a way of arguing for the position of Woodcraft within the movement and answering his critics.³²

However in August 1919 Hargrave took the decisive step of forming his closest allies and supporters in to a semi-secret society known as 'The Ndembo' (or 'Chapter of the Seven Eremites'). This resulted from an all-night meeting at Caravan Camp with 'Little Lone Wolf' (C.J. Mumford) who encouraged White Fox to bolster his Woodcraft philosophy with a more mystical and esoteric edge. The Ndembo set itself a two-fold task: first, to enquire privately into and study mystical ritual and primitive ceremony (this was to prove crucial from the point of view of the future activities of the Kibbo Kift) and, secondly, to cultivate and spread Woodcraft, camping and anti-militarism propaganda within the Scouts.³³ To this end, a 'Scalp-Hunters Club' was formed in the autumn of 1919, to informally liaise with Scoutmasters and senior Scouts.

Even at this stage, Hargrave was to assert that the Ndembo "was in no way intended as the beginnings of an organisational break-away." Rather, it was to help Woodcraft "set the pace" within the movement.³⁴ This view was disputed by 'Little Lone Wolf' who, looking back from the vantage point of 1931, saw this galvanising of Woodcraft groups as part of an attempt to recruit

members of a *new* movement. The task of the Ndembo was to “precipitate the Woodcraft element out of the Scout movement.” Interestingly, ‘Little Lone Wolf’ claims that the words ‘Kibbo Kift’ were being used within the Ndembo as early as April 1920.³⁵

Whatever the true intention behind the Ndembo, the storm clouds were gathering. *The Trail*’s letter pages were to be filled with heated correspondence concerning Hargrave’s position within the movement, his advocacy of ‘Tribal Training’ and his continued criticism of Scouting policy, as well as his controversial new book *The Great War Brings It Home*, published in 1919. Hargrave aroused heated debate by calling for *Scouting For Boys* to be revised with the militarist passages removed, Troops and Patrols to be discouraged from indoor Scouting, drilling and parades, and the Scouts’ Royal Charter to be altered in order to facilitate these changes.³⁶

Critics also pointed to the growing links between Hargrave and sections of the Labour movement, ‘Our Circle’, the Co-Operative movement journal approvingly noted the scouting ‘rebels.’³⁷ Drakeford suggests that Hargrave’s contact with the Labour Party would have come through Mary Neal, a social worker and former Suffragette, who helped build ties between Woodcrafters, the Camelot Club and Clement Attlee.³⁸ Neal had also helped to run the Esperance Working Girls Club in the 1900s, whose members came mostly from the sweated garment trade in the Euston area. It is significant that, as Drakeford points out, the first public mention of the words ‘Kibbo Kift’ was “coupled directly with the Labour movement.”³⁹ As *The Trail* stated: “The Labour Party, or at least the thinking part of it, is keenly interested in Woodcraft methods and

of the Kibbo Kift – the Green Revolution as opposed to the Red Revolution of murder.”⁴⁰

White Fox ventured an early definition of what it meant to be part of ‘Kibbo Kift’. Apart from being strong-minded and strong-limbed, “the Kibbo Kift are those who will stand faithful unto death for the truth, for honour, for the upright life against greed, gain and sordid commercialism and industrial slavery.”⁴¹

Hargrave claimed that the Kibbo Kift were an inner circle of those representing the interests of Woodcraft Scouting, as opposed to the overt military bias of the Scouting hierarchy. Sadly, he seemed to be coming to the conclusion that any hope of winning over Scouting was now futile; he therefore attempted to “force the issue.”⁴²

On the 18th August 1920 at Denison House, Vauxhall, the first ‘Althing’, (or General Meeting) of the Kibbo Kift was convened and a Covenant drawn up by Hargrave. A dozen or so attended including an observer, ‘Little Bear’, from the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry. The Covenant was adopted, but only half of those present signed it, thus becoming the first members of a ‘movement within a movement’. This meeting led to further debate concerning Hargrave’s position within the Scouts, exacerbated by his essay ‘*What I’m Driving At*’ in *The Trail* for November 1920. Consequently in January 1921 the Scouting hierarchy made its next move against Hargrave and he was accused of contravening Rule 2 of ‘Scout Law’ which demanded Scouting loyalty. Found guilty, he was formally dismissed from both his Scouting Commission and the movement itself. Within two weeks the London Scouting Association narrowly voted to prevent White Fox from using *The Trail* for any further propaganda purposes. He was accused

of being both a 'Pantheist' and a 'Bolshevik' and prevented from addressing any Scout meetings or from writing in the Scouting press. *The Trail*, whose editor Alfred Barralet had been invited to the first Althing but who did not attend, was also punished by having the paper's independence usurped by the Scouting leadership. As Barralet was seen as a potential supporter of Hargrave, the hierarchy deemed that, "by taking his paper we disarm him and the Bolshies."⁴³

July 1921 saw a one hundred page statement being brought to the London Scout Council, the intention of which was to block any use of 'Tribal Training.' The proposer, Mr. Poynter Adams, objected in particular to Hargrave's view that children should investigate other religions. He himself concluded that, "Buddha was a wicked idol worshipped by poor pagan niggers in India."⁴⁴ 'Seonee Wolf' and 'Old Wolf' (O.N. Potter) managed to secure the defeat of this initiative.

Hargrave underestimated the sustained nature and strength of the official Scouting reaction. Following his 'excommunication', there was a concerted plan to leave the Kibbo Kift 'dead in the water'. The Scout movement, nationally and internationally, were warned against White Fox. This was particularly disastrous concerning Hargrave's relationship with the Dutch Scouting movement. In June 1921 Hargrave was invited to Holland by Baron Van de Pallandt, the Dutch Youth leader, who was interested in Woodcraft and Kibbo Kift techniques. He had already asked White Fox to contribute a column to the Dutch Scouting paper *De Pfadfinder*. This relationship could have proved a valuable source of strength for the new movement. However the Boy Scouts Association (the B.S.A.) sent over a special commissioner to 'tell the truth' about Hargrave and consequently the venture went no further. Hargrave was out in the cold.

The B.S.A. was ranged against him and he had left Pearson's in March 1920, ostensibly to free up his time for writing. In addition to this, he also had a new wife, 'Minobi,' (Ruth Clark) and had bought a home at 'Wayside,' a bungalow at King's Langley, not far from his father at Latimer. Yet Hargrave was unshakeable in his own sense of destiny and work began on 'forging the Kin.' As Hargrave wrote in *The Trail*, "Watch Woodcraft! It is slow but certain."⁴⁵

3. The Great War Brings It Home

Hargrave's critics, and indeed his admirers, were given plenty of ammunition during this period of internal flux, owing to the appearance of his *The Great War Brings It Home – The Natural Reconstruction of an Unnatural Existence*. This was a mighty effort at forging an entire Woodcraft philosophical system, that Hargrave claimed had taken him ten years to write. Alfred Barralet called it: "the clearest, sanest, boldest and most arresting exposition of natural philosophy that I have ever laid hands on."¹

In this work, White Fox attempted to pinpoint the causes of modern civilisation's evident degeneration, citing such diverse figures as Alfred Russell Wallace, Thoreau, Tagore and Charles Eastman, before putting forward practical solutions as an alternative. Hargrave declared that in a holistic, organic universe where, "we are united to all things in the earth and also to the stars above, by the very elements of which we are made," civilisation was attempting to live outside and beyond nature.² This process resulted in an effete, unhealthy and ultimately doomed society. Evidence for this was close at hand: "The wild, hardy life is natural and permanent. The other temporary and artificial. To get

‘out of touch with nature’ is to get out of touch with life itself and yet, our modern civilisation did its best to ignore nature in every possible way. Such a civilisation tends to destroy life and the Great War brings it home.”³

Such a view was not unusual. The British countryside, idealised into becoming the eternal, timeless, ‘spirit of the nation’, was given further mystique and allure by both the post-war situation of agrarian depression, coinciding with increased urban and suburban demands on rural land, as well as the experience of the War itself. As Richard Mabey put it, the countryside, “could be looked to as a cultural bedrock in times of trouble, a repository of history and a source of inspiration as well as substance.”⁴

The Edwardian poets, already fired up with rustic socialism, ensured that when they went into uniform, the officer class dreamt of ‘Grantchester not Manchester.’⁵ When the poet Edward Thomas was asked why he had enlisted in the Artists Rifles in 1915, he dramatically reached down and grasped a fistful of English earth and declared “Literally, for this!”⁶

Arthur Bryant furthered this view of an army marching on a rural vision:

The lyrics which young English soldiers made to calm their hearts during the strained watches of The Great War were not about battles, nor military prowess, nor hatred of the foe; they were not, even for the most part about the horrors and calamities that encompassed the anguished human soul. They were about the land of hedges and flowers they had crossed the seas to defend.⁷

Hargrave’s response to the Great War, his retreat to the beech woods, was again not uncommon. To numbers of ex-servicemen, the countryside became, through convalescent homes, hospitals or private retreats, a point of orientation in the rebuilding of shattered bodies and minds. Henry Williamson, the nature writer and novelist, who also volunteered in 1914, found himself unable to cope with London and left for rural Devon in 1921, not to forget the

War but to remember it more clearly and to come to terms with the experience of it. Williamson was clear about where the blame for the war lay, "Wars are made by the pallid mob-spirit, by mass escapist from indoor and pavement living; the pale faced men whose natural instincts are repressed." ⁸ Or, as 'George Bowling', Orwell's hero in *Coming up for Air* put it, "Fishing is the opposite of War." ⁹

To those sufficiently radicalised by the War or the economic slump that followed, the land came to be seen as the basis and key to a new society. The war tainted the whole philosophical foundation of Western civilisation. Everything was up for re-evaluation and the Victorian materialists' and utilitarians' works stood condemned. Contemporary religion, education, government and economics had in the words of Hargrave failed "to prevent the outbreak of such a hell on earth as makes the devil acknowledge himself out devilled and ready to send in his resignation."¹⁰ In quiet contrast, the land and natural world remained unsullied and constant: the remedy for a crisis-ridden and dying civilisation lay, literally, at one's feet.

John Hargrave cited Baden-Powell repeating the oft-heard Victorian and Edwardian analogy between the state of the West and the collapse of Rome, "There is no reason to suppose that our unhealthy civilisation will have a better chance of surviving than the remote civilisations of the past... Every effete civilisation must crumble away."¹¹

However Hargrave sought to reinforce his argument with a sociological approach, examining with empirical precision the reports and records of numerous charities, authorities and boards, ranging from the N.S.P.C.C., the Destitute Children's Dinners Society and the Crippled Children's Help Society,

to the Inter Committee on Physical Deterioration, the Civic and Moral Education League and the Montessori Society.

The only hope lay in the possibility that, “a new and virile offshoot may rise to strike out on a line of its own.”¹² Hargrave then uncomfortably embraced the murky realms of eugenical ethics: ‘Reconstruction’ and ‘Regeneration’ could only be performed by the fittest in society, “a healthy nucleus [forming] a living protest.”¹³ In such an apocalyptic situation, clear priorities and difficult decisions had to be made. Hargrave asked why a disabled children’s home had been built in the countryside: “If it is important to give a good, healthy life, out of doors to the cripples, how much more important to give those who are more fit a chance to *keep fit*, that they may grow into strong, healthy parents and so produce children who are *not* cripples and invalids?”¹⁴

‘Reconstruction’ thereby meant the ‘The Salvation of the Fit’ and the overriding objective must be “the welfare of the well. Of what use is it to show mercy to the weak if we are continually impairing the bright and promising life of the strong? What is all our ministration to the unhealthy, if, at the same time, we are breaking down the healthy?”¹⁵

The problem had been compounded by the dysgenic nature of the Great War which meant that the ‘unfit’ were left at home ‘to breed’. “What of the weaklings, the unfit... the slackers and the feeble minded loafers of the land? Are these to be the foundation of the New Race? Are these, the unmanly ones, the half-lunged, the poor, mentally crippled creatures, are these to produce the next generation?”¹⁶

Just as Ancient Rome had to be ‘swept aside’ by the Barbarians, so the task was to “produce the ‘Barbarian’ stock ourselves.”¹⁷ This could only come

from Youth and a minority of Youth at that. As White Fox wrote in *The Trail*, 1919: "We are not out for numbers, we are not shouting for recruits. We want the pick of the bunch. We want only those who want Woodcraft... the old scouts, the old hands, the moss-bank campers, the people who think and practice the way of the Open Trail." ¹⁸

With an apparently conciliatory nod to the Scouts, Hargrave claimed, "I do not propose to start a new organisation, movement or society, far less anything in the way of an opposition, but rather to show how most of the existing organisations are pointing in the same direction. They are all working to one end, one ideal, the bettering of the race."¹⁹

In one breathtaking sweep, Hargrave managed to incorporate an enormous range of organisations in to the New Age movement. The work of such diverse bodies as 'The Eugenics Lobby', the Birmingham Cripples Union, English Folk Dance Society, the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, the Amateur Camping Club, Cycle Touring Club, the Duty and Discipline Movement, the Open-Air schools, the Garden City movement and the Youth movements, all implied a reaction to the 'artificial existence' and a change of national mood: "Nowadays hundreds and hundreds of people turn with longing eyes to a natural outdoor life."²⁰

Hargrave then proposed a number of initiatives to maintain this momentum, in regards to the training of the male youth. He suggested the establishment of National Camping and Training Grounds, of wilderness areas run by trained teachers of Woodcraft, private family camps, where parents could teach children and open air Woodcraft schools, where summer camps would entertain boys for three months of the year. The object of this would be to instil

a new culture of 'hardihood', health and self-discipline, which would reinvigorate and restore a balance to a sedentary and over civilised society. Some sort of 'Test of Initiation' would qualify a boy for entrance to a school, followed by a 'Test of Manhood', which would enable one to enjoy the benefits of citizenship and register to vote. Hargrave, ever conscious of the middle class audience he was essentially addressing, denied he was advocating a return to some literal 'primitive' state of being: "We ought to go forward, keeping knowledge and training hand in hand and try to breed a race of Intellectual Savages. That is a race which can develop a sane and highly cultivated intellect, while at the same time, training the body to the finest pitch of muscle, rhythm and endurance." ²¹

Hargrave also denied that this could be construed as part of some anarchist agenda: "It is not a revolt against society, but against the present conditions under which society suffers. It is no cranky notion that we will have nothing to do with any machine-made article, but that life – strong, healthy life – is better than comfort and the accumulation of unnecessary rubbish." ²²

Hargrave had used anthropological research to formulate his 'Tribal Training' methods, just as Seton had picked and chosen from the Red Indian cultures to augment his Lonecraft Indians initiative. Hargrave trawled through diverse cultures selecting only "the most picturesque and medically correct rites and customs." ²³ Hargrave, like Baden-Powell, seemed to recognise that pointing to one primitive model was too vulnerable. In his Woodcraft book, *Lonecraft*, Hargrave had declared: "The Lone Scout goes to the Red Indians of America for Scoutcraft, the Knights of King Arthur for chivalry, or to the Chinese for wisdom." ²⁴ So Hargrave cited a whole welter of peoples, from

Eskimos and the Dyaks of Borneo, to the Veddas of Ceylon and the bushmen of Africa and Australia. (Any 'evils' or barbarism practised among such cultures were more than counter balanced by the atrocities of the Western World, both intrinsically and in its modern form.) However above all these the Red Indian for his qualities of strength, bravery, cunning, patience, stoicism, and 'natural religious instinct' was still "the master of the art of Woodcraft."²⁵ Hargrave warned though: "I am not trying to uphold the savage as a model of virtue, nor do I advocate a system of slavish imitation. Let us rather evolve an outdoor life of our own, to suit higher conditions, our intellectual instincts and our own country."²⁶ White Fox had spoken, now it was up to those who heard to step forward and answer the cry: "My song is Good Medicine"²⁷

Firmly excommunicated from the Scouts, Hargrave faced the task of consolidating the Kindred, defining its aims and methods and preparing its way forward. Like the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry, Hargrave wished the Kibbo Kift to be qualitatively different from its parental body, the Scouts. To this end, although the Kibbo Kift saw itself as part of the wider European and American Youth movements, it was to be open to adults of both sexes. Theoretically there was no age barrier and anyone who could sign their name on the Covenant, pay the £1 annual subscription fee and undertake to provide themselves with a costume could join. The inclusion of girls and women was no small step and Hargrave, who admitted that he was no expert in Woodcraft for women, was certainly influenced here by his young wife Minobi. Ruth Clark had established the Camp Fire Guides in 1919. They were a small, yet significant Woodcraft group who would quickly become indistinguishable from the Kibbo Kift.

The expected mass exodus from the Scouts, especially the Rover Scouts, had not materialised and formal Kindred membership remained small. At the 1922 Althing, there were around two hundred people in attendance. Most came from London, the Home Counties and smaller pockets in the Midlands and North West.²⁸ 'LoneWolf's', testimony reflected the success of the unofficial Scout war against the Kibbo Kift at this time. He declined to join the Kibbo Kift saying: "The Scouts were not militaristic, he [Hargrave] was quite wrong there. It was just it had tended to become more indoor than outdoor." Despite the fact that 'Lone Wolf' was "in at the birth of the Kibbo Kift inside the Scout movement," (indeed his meeting with Hargrave "was one of the highlights of [his] early life") he said that when "Hargrave decided to come out of it, I finished. It wasn't my line at all....[Hargrave] began to do a few things that didn't appeal to me."²⁹

The *Scouting Gazette* was blasé about Hargrave's movement: "If it could persuade any of our Rovers to throw over their Scout ideal of honour and promise, [it] would rid us of some who were not worth having in this movement, whatever value they may be for the Kibbo Kift."³⁰ A good example of a Scout Troop that swung over to the Kibbo Kift wholesale is provided by the 'Gara-Gara-Gats' of Wandsworth, who began life as the St. Mary's Troop. Led by ex-serviceman 'White Chief' (C.J. Ward) they decided to follow Hargrave and the Woodcraft trail in 1919. More commonly, Scout and Rover groups simply decided to leave (or were expelled) from their loyal Troops and affiliated to the Kindred.

The Kibbo Kift had also managed to get itself invited to *The Trail* Annual Dinner at the Baltic House Restaurant in February 1922, where they

created a stir by appearing in their dress habits. Others too were taking an active interest in the potential of this new organisation, such as sections of the Labour movement. As has been noted, Hargrave had come into contact with sections of the Labour and Co-Operative movements. While always categorically denying that he was in favour of a 'Red Revolution' or class war, in *The Great War Brings It Home*, he expressed the hope that the Labour Party, the Independent Labour Party, the Fabian Society, the Socialist Labour Party and even the Marxist Socialist Party of Great Britain, would adopt the ideas of 'Outdoor Reconstruction.'³¹

'Silver Tongue' (Joseph Reeves) secretary at The Royal Arsenal Co-Operative Society, with the aid of 'Seonee Wolf' pressed for the Arsenal Society to be represented in the Kindred. This led to a public display of camping and Woodcraft by the Kibbo Kift at the Co-Operative Exhibition in the grounds of the Crystal Palace in 1921. However there was always to be an uneasy relationship between Co-Operative societies and the Kibbo Kift. According to 'Blue Swift', the Co-Operative movement, already suspicious of the Scouts, saw the Woodcrafters as "outlandish and primitive."³² Others felt that the Co-Operative needed no advice from the Kibbo Kift on how to manage and run Camps for Youth Sections. The Co-Operative movement already had an established pedigree in the organisation of leisure activities.

The Co-operative movement also had strong links with the Holiday Fellowship (previously known as the Co-operative Holiday's Association) which had been established by a Lancashire Congregationalist minister, T.A. Leonard, in the 1890s. Leonard, rather like the Folk revivalists' revulsion at music-hall, took exception to the vulgar and lurid and expensive attractions of

the seaside resort which was becoming increasingly popular in the second half of the nineteenth century. Leonard wanted to try and entice holidaymakers away from Blackpool and Morecombe in favour of the more wholesome delights of the Lake District.

Holidays offered were affordable to even the tightest of budgets, offering basic accommodation and facilities. Mixed parties would engage in strenuous daily walks, before returning home to a nutritious meal and a self-improving evening lecture, often conducted by Leonard himself, on subjects such as Wordsworth or glacial movement. A former holidaymaker recalled the progressive spirit of the C.H.A. in the 1890s:

We were rebels against all stuffiness and snobbery. On the pleasure beach one has to pay for everything... and the child learns to think of joy in terms of money. We learned to think of joy in terms of comradeship, health, adventure and god's out-of-doors. We were out for a holiday away from the obsession of the everlasting cash nexus, the artificial, and all the sophistications of an all dominating civilisation.³³

(The Holiday Fellowship in the twentieth century moved from strength to strength: by 1926, it could boast eleven permanent holiday sites across Britain, plus four abroad.)

Attention from the Left did, however, reflect the progressive spirit of the Kibbo Kift's message. The Kin's Covenant, which every member had to sign, was an ambitious blend of radical measures to "counter-act the ill effects of industrialism and overcrowding in towns and cities" through the establishment of Woodcraft Groups for both sexes, Camp Schools, Open Air Schools, Holiday Groups, Local Camping Grounds, Land Reservations and "open spaces for camp training and Nature Craft."³⁴ Alongside this would be the promotion of handicrafts (through the Craft Guild and local co-operative workshops) as well as broader hopes for religious tolerance, international disarmament, an

international educational policy, international free trade, freedom of movement, and an international currency system, “to stabilise the purchasing power of money in all countries.”³⁵ Also the Covenant called for the abolition of secret treaties and secret diplomacy and the establishment of a League of Nations which every civilised and primitive nation could attend. The Covenant also spoke of the role of Family Groups, to help foster Woodcraft and to build a “heritage of health.”³⁶ Regional Folk Moots and Village Councils would become the local focus for those who work for “the common weal of their locality.”³⁷ Their role would be to act as ‘Guardians’ of local Woodcraft initiatives, Open Air Schools, School camps and camping sites and to seek “the general development their district towards health in body, mind and spirit” through “local sports, festivals and ceremonies.”³⁸

This Covenant was designed to appeal to as wide a selection of opinion as possible. In comparison to the rather exotic and bizarre public face of the Kindred, the language of the Covenant was moderate and mundane, thus enabling Co-Operative or Left-wing groups to affiliate with ease. Whatever the naivety of the proposals, the first aim of the Kibbo Kift was to spearhead and channel the popular hatred and resentment, expressed culturally, against industrial society. Their political demands were mere appendages to a deeper and more important ‘revolution of the soul’, which was being voiced by the German Youth movement in the early years of the Weimar Republic.³⁹ Hargrave saw Woodcraft not so much as a primarily political weapon, but as a cultural and spiritual one with which to regenerate society. What is more, the Kibbo Kift also stated in the early years that they were in no hurry to transform the world. Hargrave’s analysis in *The Great War Brings It Home* was that he was flowing

with the growing tide of public opinion that heralded the New Age and that the Kibbo Kift would naturally 'evolve' to fulfil its destiny.

Hargrave was conscious that elements within the Co-Operative groups linked to the Kibbo Kift saw the possibility of a 'mass-movement' role for the organisation, turning the Kibbo Kift into a Labour version of the Boy Scouts. Hargrave was adamant that this should never take place and he realised that the ideals expressed in the Covenant overrode the specific political interests of the co-operative elements, owing to their Woodcraft technique. It still took three years however for the issue to be 'exorcised', for the Left-wing elements to be purged and for White Fox to stamp his total authority on the Kibbo Kift at the 1924 Althing.⁴⁰

Hargrave was determined not to let the Kindred be tagged onto the end of any 'big movement'. For the time being he was happy to let the Kindred find its natural point of orientation. He certainly did not want another whale to come along and swallow the new Kibbo Kift, having itself just been spat from the belly of the Scouting leviathan. He welcomed the interest expressed by the inheritors of the Edwardian Simple Life ideal, who saw the Kibbo Kift as an intriguing vehicle with possibilities. They were:

A host of little sea worms, sea cucumbers and sea urchins, [who] came and tried to get us to eat them. They said, 'Dear Minnow, we love you, do please eat us.' They said, 'Folk Dancing – and Rhythms'; they said 'Fabianism (minus G.B.S.), Gymnosophy (they mean Nakedness, but are unable to speak plainly), Anthroposophy, Theosophy, and Food Reform.' All kinds of things they said: 'Co-operative Societies, Robert Owen, Sunlight and sun-bathing; experimental pyschology; Nu spelin; Nu Eras: Nu everything – except a Nu Heaven and a Nu Earth. Well, we took them in little bits and ate the parts which might build our backbone stronger and chucked the other parts away.'⁴¹

However most cranks and 'faddists' were only to join for part of the ride, falling away as White Fox came to demand more uniformity, commitment,

discipline and, most importantly, loyalty. Hargrave's method was to make the Kindred an uniquely English and ultimately World phenomenon. Like most Utopians, Hargrave called for the 'spiritual revolution' that must, of necessity, precede any political or social one. The Kibbo Kift was to be the élite vanguard of such a revolution. Everything about them spoke of distinction, separation, originality and novelty. They were distinguished from the outside by dress, language, ceremony, ritual and they were fashioned by Woodcraft. They were to be the embodiment of what Hargrave called 'The Active Few', those special élites throughout all human society from the primitive 'Duk-Duk' of the Bismark Archipelago and the Ndembo of Lower Congo, through to the Druids, Templars and Carbonari, up to the contemporary *Bolsheviki*, Italian Blackshirts and *Sinn Fein*, who, whether they realised it or not, carried "the 'manu', soul, mass-ego, urge and historic mission of the group... which is helpless without them."⁴²

The most obvious statement of the Kibbo Kift was its costume. Hargrave was unrelenting in his demands concerning the precision and uniformity of the Kin dress or 'habit'. Like Baden-Powell, Hargrave enjoyed the picturesque and he thought long and hard over the exact style and composition of the Kibbo Kift outfit. Such was its importance it was to be under constant revision during the 1920s. During his days as Commissioner, he had encouraged boys to wear Indian style fringed, loose fitting sweaters and moccasins modelled on those worn by the Hudson Bay fur trappers. John Hargrave described his pre-Kibbo Kift costume as follows:

When in camp I wear a green-fringed hunting shirt, (with hood,) green shorts, no stockings, sandals and a staff. For Council Fire Ceremonies, I wear a fringed costume with my totem - the White Fox – on a circle of orange in the front. The sleeves are long and decorated down the shoulders and across the

back with bright, savage coloured bands of blue and green and orange materials. It 'takes' the boys. I look mad. People laugh. But I'm learning how to Scout and they are sitting indoors with their indigestion and a pair of spectacles.⁴³

The Kibbo Kift quickly established its characteristic green or grey jerkin, hood, ('cowl') and shorts, which formed the basis of the 'habit.' The costume was to be both symbolic, "an outward, visible indication of the spirit of the age."⁴⁴ It represented a 'universal' Medieval style reminiscent of journeymen-craftsman and pilgrims.⁴⁵ With its leather belt, ash staff, rucksack, stockings and boots, the dress was also ideal for the hiker and camper. In bad weather or at night the Kindred would don a great cape ('cope') which, with Hargrave's eye for military elegance "[had] the long dignified lines of the field service cloak, made famous in the Prussian army."⁴⁶ In the latter half of the 1920s the Kin also developed a more dramatic ceremonial form of dress for officials at formal gatherings. This comprised of a series of luxurious robes in rich colours and expensive fabrics corresponding to the status of the wearer. Hargrave as Head Man, enjoyed a brilliant white robe, lined with regal purple.

In response to the incredulous, the Kibbo Kift was adamant that it was the so-called 'civilised' people who looked ridiculous. The uniform of everyday bourgeois respectability: the black suit, waistcoat and trousers, spoke of the slavery of a "syncopated civilisation." The bowler hat struck the Kibbo Kift as being particularly contemptible, "it is pathetic – a tragi-comedy – the headgear of a purposeless routine. It is the symbol of frustration – physical, psychological and religious. It is an inane thing."⁴⁷ (The fact that Charlie Chaplin used the item as one of his comic trademarks was particularly apt.) 'DeathWatch' (Roland Berrill) wondered what future archaeologists would ever make of it.⁴⁸

These robes were made for the Kin council by members who were expected to make their own Kin habit too. Dress patterns, cloth and material suppliers were advertised in Kin literature. This emphasis on self-reliance and handicraft was important and the more dextrous were encouraged to make their own rucksacks, belts, moccasins and tents. However any 'woodcrafty' Scout who had been reading Hargrave over the past six years would not have been surprised. Hargrave had always encouraged boys to 'make' their own kit from camp sleds and tent pegs, to camp furniture like stools, bookcases and clothes racks, to items such as clothes pegs, axe shafts, brooms and stools, to musical instruments such as pan pipes and harps. 'Primitive-type' tents, huts and shelters were to be favoured such as *tipis*, Zulu huts and Gypsy 'benders': "In no case should ordinary bell tents be hired or bought from an outfitter or store. The art of tent-and-hut-making [was] a principal part of the tribal training and to neglect one, [was] to neglect the whole."⁴⁹

Hargrave also recommended learning more skilled handicrafts such as weaving, pottery and metal work, as well as building canoes and rafts. Imagination, a little skill and perseverance would transform any camp through its use of homemade woven door-flaps, wooden tables and wooden crockery. Seemingly ordinary items should allow free rein to the artistic imagination of the craftsman. Hargrave did however advocate a nature-based 'Tribal Design' style for decoration. Clear and stylised outlines of trees, flowers, birds and beasts, as well as simple patterns would decorate tents, canoes, log books, mats and bowls. The application of Seton's 'Recapitulation Theory' is clearly evident here and in *The Great War Brings It Home* Hargrave reiterated that, "the boy is ... a reincarnation of prehistoric man. State education ignores this, curbing the

boy's 'natural' independent spirit so that he becomes "a submissive soul" or a "hooligan". As far as White Fox was concerned: "I am for the so-called 'bad boy', for at any rate he has retained his untamed and unbroken spirit, whereas the other has become a spiritless creature without instinct of any kind." ⁵⁰

The use of 'Totems' was important within the Kibbo Kift. Seton had originally favoured the introduction of a totemistic element to the Woodcraft Indians. Each Indian Tribe or Band would chose a Totem and a related call sign. The Totem usually referred to an animal or bird, but flowers and trees became more popular with the advent of women Woodcrafters. The device should be easy to draw and if appropriate its call able to be imitated. (Totems had originally been used within the Boy Scouts, but unfortunately it is now believed that Baden-Powell 'borrowed' the Totem from Seton's idea, incorporating it into the Boy Scouts in the format of 'Patrols.')

⁵¹

The Kindred was to be organised into three sections: 'Lodges' for adult Kinsmen, 'Tribes' for children and 'Roofrees' for family groups, 'lone' Kinsfolk could also affiliate. The Lodges and Tribes would be responsible for producing their own collective Totem but each individual also had to have a personalised Totem which would be 'taboo' only, meaning no one could handle it except for the designated. Both Totems represented the strength, origin and unity of the Tribe as well as each person's strength or 'medicine.' Hargrave's original flat wooden stencil of a White Fox, painted in white and orange, was eventually replaced by an intricate three-dimensional carving of his own design.

⁵²

Whilst it is easy to highlight the major differences between the Kibbo Kift and Scouts, it is important to note that the Kibbo Kift owed a great deal to

Baden-Powell in particular. The role of fantasy and imagination, which Baden-Powell invested in the Scouts, can be seen in evidence in Hargrave's *Kindred*. Both Woodcraft Scouts and Kibbo Kift were forever being exhorted to 'be picturesque'. Hargrave saw in Baden-Powell what he saw in himself: a fondness for an unorthodox and a youthful exuberance, which was what he most admired in the Old Wolf:

He was a mental psychic, although he never knew it... There was a Huck Finn hidden in B-P. – a kind of backwards urchin, or maybe a gremlin – that tugged pretty hard and might have upset the whole jamboree. It broke lose in small exuberances and tricky quirks... It was the Boy-Poltergeist in B-P. that made rapport with the primitive fraternity gang spirit of boyhood. Like a true poltergeist, it rang a bell and rapped on the door... And thousands of boys... ran after it to camp. They made their escape from a dreary, half-dead commercialised and deadly dull civilisation, and during the weekends, anyhow, pretended to be backwoodsmen... B-P. tapped the primitive urge that is cribb'd, cabin'd and confined by civilised herd-conditioning and convention. He tapped it and unlocked it. And for a while... it ran free.⁵³

A Kinsman known as 'The Tracker' saw that the new post-war politics of youth demanded "creative imagination." As he saw it: "One Barrie or one Kipling on the side of peace would do more to fire the imagination of youth, than all your committee meetings put together."⁵⁴ This would be in contrast to the "dry as dust" politics of resolutions, amendments, conferences, petitions, demonstrations and "the committee ritual." The Kibbo Kift were told to: "Go away and play. When you have absented yourself from your committee room in order to sail dead leaves across the duck pond seven times seven times and when you can dig up a let's pretend Treasure Chest in the orchard behind the cow-sheds, perhaps then you will have been born again; if the dry rot has not eaten into your inside self."⁵⁵

There is more than a hint of the 'Illuminated's' evocation of fantasy and imagination in this ridiculing of the 'adult world' of boredom and stultifying formality. Just as Baden-Powell celebrated Peter Pan, so fellow Woodcrafters conjured up a world of imagination and play, albeit for serious reasons. Again they felt themselves to be in touch with the New Age *Zeitgeist*, after all, did not such Edwardian notables such as John Ireland, Arthur Conan Doyle and W.B. Yeats all at some point postulate on the existence of fairies?

In *The Great War Brings It Home* Hargrave provided a vast range of imaginative ideas, activities and rituals that would form the heart of 'Tribal Training'. Much of this was to be incorporated into the Kibbo Kift or modified and adapted for use at the Lonecraft camps. Fire was seen to be, "the very core, the heart and the mainspring of Tribal Training."⁵⁶ Therefore any camp should be built around a 'Council Fire.' In supposedly Red Indian fashion, the Council Members would sit in a semicircle (or half-moon) around the fire. The Council Fire was also taboo and a designated 'Keeper of the Fire' would light the flames using, if possible, a fire drill. Hargrave had been fascinated by this method after seeing Seton himself performing the technique at the Albert Hall in 1908. The Keeper would guard and feed the flames, cooking or burning rubbish on The Fire was strictly taboo. In front of The Fire and the half moon of Council seats would stand the Tribal Totem decorated, erected and protected by the 'Totem Keeper'. To the left of the Totem Pole would stand the 'Beater of the Tom-Tom' dressed in a mock leopard skin apron, holding a primitive drum or tom-tom with which to beat out the tattoos. Other special posts included 'Keeper of the Legends' who kept the camp log (or 'Book of Tribal Records') and was expected to be able to be camp story teller, the 'Keeper of the Garbage,' who

had responsibility for sanitation, latrines and general hygiene, 'Tribal Medicine Man,' who had a knowledge of first-aid, and 'Herald,' who was the Master of Ceremonies for the camp. Further positions included 'Tribal Dispatch Runner' and 'Tribal Dancer,' who would have been a gymnast or possibly a dance instructor.

To qualify for a seat on the Council several criteria had to be met. For example, no one under fourteen could hold a position. A boy would have to have earned his Woodcraft name by this stage (or 'blooded his spear' as it was known.) He must have experience of camping out for six nights without a tent or hut and he must also have undergone the 'Nine Tests of Initiation'. These were the Tests of the Supple Limb, Keen Eye, Sharp Nose, Fleet Foot, Listening Ear, Silent Paw, the Wander Camp Test, the Test of Silence and the Test of the Sunburnt Skin. They demanded a considerable degree of dedication and perseverance. The Test of the Sharp Nose involved being able to follow the trail of a raw onion rubbed on gates and fence posts for up to one mile, as well as being able to snort saline solution up one's nose to clean it. The Test of the Silent Paw demanded that a candidate walk barefoot for half a mile through autumnal beech woods without making a sound. 'Listeners' would be posted to secretly monitor. There was also a second grade of tests that were more unusual. The Test of the Hindu *Bhagat* stated that the candidate must take a cold bath and rub oneself down with dock leaves. Then, still naked and supposedly free from human scent, one had to wander into the woods and obtain photographs or sketches of six wild creatures. The Test of the Romany *Chal* involved learning a smattering of Gypsy and Tramp slang, following a 'patteran' (or grass trail),

building a 'tan' and most ambitiously, baking a hedgehog in a clay oven and eating it.

When these had been completed one would be initiated into the Council. A Tribe member would chant the 'Laws of *Bushido*' over the sacred flame, a further evocation of the Edwardian fascination with the Japanese Samurai. These laws called for respect, honour, truth, 'Honest Injun' service, reverence for the 'Great Mystery' and love of nature. They advocated stoicism, kindness to man and beast, being ready to lend a 'helping hand', having a 'clear heart', not being a 'swank', remembering that 'you are a brother to every living thing' and that 'rags and riches make no impression upon you.'⁵⁷ According to 'Blue Swift' these 'Nine Trials of Initiation' never really took hold within the Kibbo Kift as they proved too difficult for some youths. In 1923 an attempt was made to codify a new series of tests. To begin with, any child who wished to join would be expected to understand and recognise the mark of the Kin, to know the salutation of the Kin (the sign of the Open Hand,) be able to draw a map of the world, be able to light an open-air fire without paper and with only one match and to understand what 'Kibbo Kift' meant. Then they had to sign a simple declaration.⁵⁸

The intention was that these should form a fully structured recapitulatory system known as the 'Seven Degrees,' but only two were ever published and made official. 'the Prehistoric', which involved making a stone axe and using a hand drill and 'the Primitive', which required one to make a tent, a bow and an arrow.

Such was the theory behind children's activities. Adult Kibbo Kift activities, although not subject to such lengthy theorising, were equally

determined and energetic. Indeed, the adult Lodges of the Kindred formed the heart of the movement and it was here, that Hargrave directed most of his prolific energies.

Footnotes for Chapter One, The Woodcraft of Black Wolf

¹ R. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1993), p.94

² For a detailed discussion of these issues, see Brian Morris, 'Ernest Thompson Seton and the Origins of the Woodcraft Movement', in *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.5 (1970); Tim Jeal, *Baden-Powell* (London: Hutchinson, 1989), pp.377-381; see also Appendix II 'Baden-Powell's Affidavit on the Origins and Sources of *Scouting for Boys*', pp.581-583. For a defence of Seton's claims, see Betty Keller, *Black Wolf: the Life of Ernest Thompson Seton* (Toronto & Vancouver: Douglas & MacIntyre, 1984), pp.161-179

³ See, for example, the following books by Ernest Thompson Seton: *Animal Heroes* (New York: Scribner's, 1904); *Bannertail: the Story of a Gray Squirrel* (New York: Scribner's, 1922); *The Biography of an Arctic Fox* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1937); *The Biography of A Grizzly* (New York: Century, 1900); *The Biography of a Silver Fox* (New York: Century, 1909); *Lives of the Hunted* (New York: Scribner's, 1900); *Lives of Game Animals*, 4 Vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1925-1928); *Rolf in the Woods* (New York: Doubleday, 1911); *Wild Animals I Have Known* (New York: Scribner's, 1898); *Woodmyth and Fable* (Toronto: William Biggs, 1905); *The Trail of the Sandhill Stag* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1899); *Old Silver Grizzle, The Badger* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1900)

⁴ J. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.58

⁵ Betty Keller, *Black Wolf*, p.125

⁶ Seton's 1891 painting 'The Sleeping Wolf', which was accepted by the Paris Salon, was followed up by an ambitious representation of a story that appeared in the French newspapers of a woodsman in the Pyrenees having been eaten by wolves. The fact that the man had been responsible for killing a number of wolves previously led to the title of the work: 'The Triumph of the Wolves'. Seton set about the preparation of the canvas with characteristic gusto: "On 6 January 1892, encouraged by his friends who insisted that such a grand theme required an enormous canvas, he prepared one nearly four and a half by seven feet, and began making detail sketches for the painting. Next, having found a suitable landscape outside of Paris, he constructed a mock-up of the scene as he envisioned it, using several wolf skins, a skull and some human bones he acquired from a medical school, peasant's clothing and sabots, and a bucket of blood which he bought from a nearby slaughterhouse. When all was ready and he had set up his easel, two forest rangers pounced on him, convinced that they had stumble upon the scene of a murder. He was released from custody only after lengthy explanations." The painting, when it was completed, however, was rejected by the Salon jurors who described it as "offensive and horrible." B.Keller, *Black Wolf*, p.124

⁷ B.Morris, 'Ernest Thompson Seton and the Origins of the English Woodcraft Movement', p.189

⁸ J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home* (London: Constable & Co., 1919), p.28

⁹ Ernest & Aubrey Westlake, 'General Introduction' to *The Woodcraft Way*, Series no.1; cited in J.Webb, *The Occult Establishment* (Illinois: Open Court, 1976), pp.83-84

¹⁰ C.B.Fry also felt that Seton's Indians would be too artificial for England: "Could you have Tom Sawyer or Huckleberry Finn in Surrey?" Curiously, Fry was also to be sought out by the Albanian government who were to offer him the throne of Albania in 1913. See C.B.Fry, *A Life Worth Living* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1939), pp.154-155. According to an interview with Hargrave, Seton also met with Rudyard Kipling who, unlike Fry, was more positive and charged him with a 'sacred' duty of "the regeneration of the Anglo-Saxon race." See J.Webb, *The Occult Establishment*, p.87.

¹¹ B.Morris, 'Ernest Thompson Seton and the Origins of the Woodcraft Movement', pp.185-186

¹² B.Keller, *Black Wolf*, p.169

¹³ Ernest Thompson Seton, 'A History of the Boy Scouts' (unpublished; undated manuscript), p.42, (Seton Papers); cited in B.Keller, *Black Wolf*, p.169

Footnotes for Chapter One, The Woodcraft Rebellion

¹ A good account of Order of Woodcraft Chivalry's early history can be found in I. O. Evans, *Woodcraft and World Service* (London: Noel Douglas, 1930), pp. 47-58; see also D. Edgell, *The Order of Woodcraft Chivalry as a New Age Alternative to the Boy Scouts* 2 Vols. (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993)

² Ernest & Aubrey Westlake, 'General Introduction' to *The Woodcraft Way*, Series no.1, p.4; cited in J.Webb, *The Occult Establishment* (Illinois: Open Court, 1976), p.86

³ J.Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), p.112

⁴ J. Hargrave, *The Suvla Bay Landing* (London: MacDonald & Co., 1964), p.57

⁵ J. Hargrave, *At Suvla Bay* (London: Constable & Co., 1916), p.16

⁶ Ibid., p.13

⁷ Ibid., p.26

⁸ J.Hargrave, 'White Fox in the Dardenelles', in *The Scout*, (Oct. 2nd. 1915), YMA/KK 215; M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters. The Green Shirts in England* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p.17

⁹ J.Hargrave, *They Can't Kill the Sun* (unpublished; undated manuscript), p.13, YMA/KK 214

¹⁰ See J.Knowles, *Alone in the Wilderness* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1913), esp. pp. 51,146. Like Baden-Powell and Rider Haggard, Knowles also felt uncomfortable in 'civilised' surroundings: "The society drawing-room, where women clad in beautiful gowns mingle with men suffering in starched linen, all of whom are breathing stale air, is a sad picture as compared with the great natural rooms of the forest where man lives with as few clothes as possible." Ibid; p.199. Details of this part of Hargrave's career were provided by Hargrave's manuscript, *They Can't Kill the Sun*, supplemented by interviews with Diana Hargrave, London, (4-12-94) as well as informal correspondence with Chris Judge Smith, Sussex

¹¹ Ibid., p.227

¹² Ibid., p.229-232

¹³ Ibid., p. 224

¹⁴ Ibid., p.239

¹⁵ J.Hargrave, 'The Origins and Development of the Kibbo Kift', in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.2, no.13 (August 1926), YMA/KK 168 (a)

¹⁶ J.Springhall, 'The Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism in Relation to British Youth Movements', in *International Review of Social History*, Vol.16 (1971), p.151

¹⁷ See J.Hargrave, *At Suvla Bay*, p.157; J.Hargrave, *The Suvla Bay Landing*, pp.53-45,68-69. Hargrave went on to give fulsome praise to the Turkish snipers who proved to be capable Woodcrafters: fit, with keen eyesight, able to go without food and water for long stretches of time. According to Hargrave, just as the Red Indian collected the scalps of his victims, so the Turks collected the military I.D. tags of the dead. See J.Hargrave, *The Totem Talks* (London: Pearsons, 1918), p.86

¹⁸ J.Hargrave, 'What's Bred in the Bone', in *The Scout*, (July 21st. 1917), YMA/KK 215

¹⁹ M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, p.20; see also *The Scout*, (July 7th. 1917), YMA/KK 215

²⁰ J. Hargrave, 'At the Sign of the Council Fire', in *The Scout*, (Dec.8th. 1917), YMA/KK 215

²¹ See J.Hargrave, 'At the Sign of the Council Fire', in *The Scout*, (April 7th. 1917); J.Hargrave, 'At the Sign of the Council Fire', in *The Scout*, (January 6th. 1917); see also letter from 'Lone Star Ranger' to *The Trail*, (Dec. 1920), YMA/KK 215. Lone Star Ranger argued that White Fox "teaches Imperialism himself, and also deprecates it."

²² J. Hargrave, 'At The Sign of the Council Fire', in *The Scout*, (January 26th. 1918), YMA/KK 215

²³ Interview with Russell Jones ('Lone Wolf') in M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, pp.34-35

²⁴ Ibid., p.21. Drakeford cited Baden-Powell's note to Sir Percy Everett (July 25th. 1917): "My only doubt about Hargrave is his ultra-views and the possibility of going off at a wrong tangent, but, ensconced under your eye or mine, he should prove to be - I think - a very valuable agent." (From the Everett Papers, PWE 4/50, 1917; Scout Association Archives)

²⁵ T.Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, pp.501-502

²⁶ Letter from J.Hargrave to R.Baden-Powell, (April 18th. 1918) cited in T.Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, p.501

²⁷ J.Hargrave, 'The Words of White Fox', in *The Trail* (Feb.1919), YMA/KK 215

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ J.Hargrave, 'The Words of White Fox', in *The Trail* (Dec.1919), YMA/KK 215

³⁰ J.Hargrave, 'The Words of White Fox', in *The Trail* (March 1919), YMA/KK 215

³¹ J.Hargrave, 'At the Sign of the Council Fire', in *The Scout* (April 14th. 1917) YMA/KK 215

³² See, for example, J.Hargrave, 'At the Sign of the Council Fire', in *The Scout* (June 16th. 1917); J.Hargrave, 'The Words of White Fox', in *The Trail* (March 1920), YMA/KK 215

³³ Testimony of 'Little Lone Wolf' (Cecil Mumford) (unpublished manuscript: Feb.14th. 1924); private archive of Chris Judge Smith, Sussex

³⁴ Letter from J.Hargrave to Kathleen Milnes ('Blue Falcon') (April 22nd. 1930), YMA/KK 94 (b)

³⁵ Note from 'Little Lone Wolf' (Cecil Mumford) (unpublished: May 29th. 1931), YMA/KK 125

³⁶ J.Hargrave, 'What I Am Driving At', in *The Trail* (Nov. 1920), YMA/KK 215

³⁷ J.Hargrave, 'The Words of White Fox', in *The Trail* (Sept. 1920), YMA/KK 215

³⁸ M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, p.44

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ J.Hargrave, 'The Words of White Fox', in *The Trail* (May 1920), YMA/KK 215

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Letter from J.Hargrave to Kathleen Milnes ('Blue Falcon') (June 12th. 1931), YMA/KK 94 (b)

⁴³ R.Baden-Powell memo. to the 'General Purpose Committee', (1922); cited in M.Rosenthal, *The Character Factory* (London: Collins, 1986), p.248

⁴⁴ Testimony of 'Little Lone Wolf' (Cecil Mumford) (unpublished: Feb.14th. 1924); private archive of Chris Judge Smith, Sussex

⁴⁵ J.Hargrave, 'The Words of White Fox', in *The Trail* (Feb. 1919), YMA/KK 215

Footnotes for Chapter One, The Great War Brings It Home

¹ *The Trail* (March 1919); cited in M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters. The Green Shirts in England* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p.37

² J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home* (London; Constable & Co., 1919), p.xii

³ Ibid., p.xvi

⁴ R.Mabey, *The Independent Magazine* (June 19th. 1993), p.43

⁵ M.J.Wiener, *English Culture & the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.64

⁶ R.Mabey, *The Independent Magazine*, p.43

⁷ Arthur Bryant, *Humanity and Politics* (London: Hutchinson, 1938), p.34; cited in J.Craven, 'Health, Wholeness, Holiness': *Radical Right and Fascist Attitudes to the British Countryside 1918-1939* (University of Birmingham, M.Phil. thesis, 1993), p.23

⁸ H.Williamson, *Goodbye West Country* (London: Putnam Books, 1937), p.157

⁹ G.Orwell, *Coming up for Air* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1939; this edn. 1959), p.85; cited in J.Craven, 'Health, Wholeness, Holiness': *Radical Right and Fascist Attitudes to the English Countryside 1918-1939* (University of Birmingham, M.Phil thesis, 1993), p.30; the thesis also discusses these themes in the chapter, 'The Great War Brings It Home', pp. 21-31

¹⁰ J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home*, p. 51

¹¹ Ibid; p.20; compare with R.Baden Powell, *Scouting for Boys* (London; Horace Cox, 1908), p. 336

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- ¹² J. Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home*, p. 20
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 66
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 65
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 51
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21
- ¹⁸ J.Hargrave, 'The Words of White Fox', in *The Trail* (October 1919), YMA/KK 215
- ¹⁹ J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home*, p.64
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25-26
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p.80
- ²² *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 80
- ²⁴ J.Hargrave, *Lonecraft* (London: Constable & Co., 1913; this edn. 1917), p.157
- ²⁵ J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home*, p.110
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 108
- ²⁷ J.Hargrave, *Lonecraft*, pp.5-6. White Fox's 'Song' was to Ernest Thompson Seton:
"O Black Wolf, I have heard your call
Your howl is Good Medicine."
- ²⁸ M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, p. 50
- ²⁹ Interview with 'Lone Wolf' (Russell Jones), cited in M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, p. 46
- ³⁰ *The Scouting Gazette* (December 1921); cited in I.O.Evans, *Woodcraft and World Service* (London: Noel Douglas, 1930), p. 64
- ³¹ J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home*, p. 363
- ³² I.O.Evans, *Woodcraft and World Service*, p.76
- ³³ Helen Walker, 'The Popularisation of the Outdoor Movement, 1900-1940', in *Journal of Sports History*, Vol.2, pp.144-145
- ³⁴ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* (London: Duckworth, 1927; reprint edn., London: William Maclellan, 1979), pp. 94-96
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶ See *Kinlaw* (unpublished manuscript; April 27th. 1925), YMA/KK 1
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ F.Trentmann, 'Civilization and Its Discontents: English Neo-Romanticism and the Transformation of Anti-Modernism in Twentieth Century Western Culture', in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.29 (1994), p.603. Trentmann makes a comparison between the Kibbo Kift and the *Freie Deutsche Jugend* in their 'soft' "anti-modern bias".

⁴⁰ See YMA/KK.2. Althing Report for 1924; it also contains the proposal for the Vote of No Confidence in John Hargrave. This led directly to the formation of the Woodcraft Folk by Leslie Paul

⁴¹ J.Hargrave, 'The Origins and Development of the Kibbo Kift', in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.2, no.13 (August 1926), YMA/KK 168 (a)

⁴² J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, p.18

⁴³ J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home*, p. 284

⁴⁴ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, p. 99

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 100

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 99

⁴⁸ Roland Berrill ('Death Watch'), 'The Bowler Hat', in *Youth*, Vol.2, no.11 (October 1923)

⁴⁹ J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home*, p. 191

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp.100-101

⁵¹ T.Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, p.378

⁵² An overview of the structure of the Kibbo Kift can be found in *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, pp. 94-97; for an interesting discussion of the use of Totems and Hargrave's interpretation of The Woodcraft Totems, see *The Totem Talks* (London: Pearson, 1918), pp. 87-89

⁵³ J.Hargrave, 'A Chosen Twelve' (unpublished manuscript; undated); private archive of Mrs. Diana Hargrave; cited in T.Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, p.416

⁵⁴ 'The Tracker', 'The Kibbo Kift Kindred', in *Youth*, Vol.2, no. 13 (Summer 1924)

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home*, p.160

⁵⁷ Ibid; pp.234-236

⁵⁸ For a detailed discussion of Tribal Training ceremonies, see J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home*, pp.159-241. For a discussion of the importance of the Covenant, see J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, pp.94-97

PART B

CHAPTER TWO: THE WAY OF THE KINDRED

1. Inside the Lodges

Teenage and adult activities were very experimental in the first four years of the Kindred. The major principle that lay behind Kin training was that of developing the 'Intellectual Savage', building health and 'hardihood', as well as developing knowledge. Hargrave was happy to let the shoals of eccentrics and 'fellow travellers' gently drift through the Lodges of the early Kindred. Kin policy was remarkably loose and flexible: at the Althing of 1923 the Kibbo Kift, ostensibly a pacifist organisation, declined to make pacifism a condition of membership, but rather refusal to take part in military activity was left up to individual conscience. However by the mid-1920s, Hargrave had instigated a questionnaire to act as a filter for membership. The Head Man would refuse admission to those deemed unsuitable from the answers they provided on the form. This questionnaire was a symptom of the general hardening of Kin outlook and method by the middle of the decade. It indicated an increased desire by the movement to see itself as an élite organisation.

From the beginning in 1920, there had been an uneasy relationship between the Left Wing / Co-Operative sections of the Kibbo Kift and Hargrave's loyal constituency. Hargrave was privately determined not to have the Kibbo Kift sidetracked by the wider Labour movement. In November 1923 he gave out a clear message: "And others shall come with a flattering tongue and honeyed voice, saying, 'Great is the Idealism of the Kibbo Kift! Verily thou art a man of genius, a wondrous philosopher, Oh White Fox! Let us come with

thee on this journey to Utopia!’ But the answer shall be, ‘many are called, but few are chosen.’ To those seeking “True Democracy” in the Kibbo Kift, Hargrave told them, “Go thy way the path is before thee.” Objecting to the leadership of the Head Man, Hargrave insisted, was like joining an army or a monastery and then refusing to salute an officer, or accept the authority of the Pope.¹

At the 1924 Althing matters came to a head. The Left of the Kibbo Kift proposed a motion that sought to democratise the essentially autocratic nature of the Kindred. The Head Man would become subject to democratic control. In a tense and bitterly argued debate held during a violent rainstorm in a deserted barn near West Wycombe, G.S.M. Ellis a Cambridge graduate and the man responsible for introducing the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society to the Kibbo Kift, ‘Seonee Wolf’ representing the Camelot Club and ‘Little Otter’ representing many of the south London lodges, led the resistance to Hargrave’s leadership style. White Fox refused ‘to bend to the stick’ and no attempt to compromise was proffered. A vote was cast and the motion was defeated by 88 votes to 55. The Co-Operative sections then formally withdrew from the Kindred along with a number of South London groups. Hargrave’s implacable opposition to a democratic, bureaucratic, committee-style leadership was typical of his personality. Instead, direct personal leadership was to be part of the Woodcraft Way. Curiously, there was a substantial amount of relief on both sides. A Scottish friend of Leslie Paul’s had complained, “It’s nae Red Indians we want sae much as Reds. It’s nae Red enough.”² Hargrave was also satisfied by this development because it established him as the undisputed leader of the movement and confirmed that the direction proposed for the Kindred, that of a

nucleus for an élite, hierarchical organisation, was to be followed. However, the purpose that such an élite was to serve was still vague and ill-defined. What mattered above all rather was a burning sense of youthful idealism and an increasing commitment to the 'Great Work'. Such 'Work' included building health and strength not solely through hiking, camping and handicrafts, but also through sociological and anthropological surveys, inquiries into religious beliefs and studies in economics and philosophy. Sadhana Lodge under the direction of 'Mingan' for example, sought "to lead the Neophyte to a full realisation of the Oneness of Life." This was to be achieved through rigorous campcraft with a special emphasis on Lone Hiking and the study of ancient religion combined with a sociological dimension. The latter was to concentrate on 'special tours' arranged to industrial slum areas "under the guidance of the Head of the Lodge."³ Such a combination of esoteric and exoteric activities was reminiscent of Hargrave's original Ndembo Lodge, as well as many other Kin Lodges. 'Little Otter' before his departure in 1924 described his involvement with the 'Owl Lodge' run by a character called 'Speke', from his bedsit in Clerkenwell. 'Speke' had etched the 'Great Mark' of the Kibbo Kift on the wall of his room, together with a representation of a Kinsman extending his hand in salutation to the sun. Hargrave's constant invocation to Kinsfolk always to be clean and tidy had not reached the stale, foetid atmosphere of 'Speke's' room, strewn as it was with maps, camping gear and books, such as *The Voyage of the Beagle*, *Tarzan of the Ape's*, *She* and *How to Develop an Attractive Personality*. 'Speke' spoke in an ambiguous fashion, typical of the early years of the Kibbo Kift. To a bemused collection of youngsters who gathered round him, 'Speke' explained the purpose of the Lodge,

The group has two policies, an inward or esoteric, an outward or enunciative policy. The enunciative is scientific, the esoteric is philosophic. We seek the unity of the part with the whole, only by finding himself in the whole, can man realise himself. Only by realising himself can man find inward peace, only by inward peace can man wage war. But before man can realise himself positively in the I AM, he must realise himself negatively in the I AM NOT. ⁴

The Owl Lodge also encouraged tests of hardihood. For example, 'Little Otter' engaged on a thirty-mile night hike to St Leonard's Forest, Sussex and despite fainting one mile from the campsite, he and his companion satisfactorily completed the first leg of their ordeal and went on to hike into Wiltshire, visiting the Chanctonbury Ring, Silbury Hill and Cissbury.⁵

White Fox referred to the years from 1920-1924 as the 'Nebulous phase' of the Kindred. Happy to innovate and experiment, the Kindred was embarking on its own 'Revolution of the Soul.' As 'Little Otter' put it:

We were going to change the world. The yeast of our brotherhood was going to ferment silently within society and transform man, we did not want to live in little boxes beside the railways, where the smoke billowed and the grit fell all over and the smell of fish and chips from one corner, mingled with the smell of stale beer from the other. We wanted a life with more meaning and fewer conventions.⁶

The Kibbo Kift was to be that 'New Race of Scout Men' Hargrave had spoken of in 1919. They were to be the Active Few who would 'permeate' society from the bottom upwards via 'living example'. There was no reason why the Kibbo Kift should not be the beginning of a new branch of the human species; pioneers, who would turn the careful building of health and selection in breeding into the moulding of a fitter, more intuitive, balanced, peaceable and truly 'civilised' Human Being. They were to be a 'New Model Army of World Citizens' dedicated to overcoming the contradictions of industrial society and looking forward to a New Age built on co-operation, health and intellect. There was no logical reason why the Kibbo Kift could not be the core of a new 'blood

caste'. White Fox himself had led the way with 'Minobi' bearing him a son, Ivan, in 1922. A 'Roof-Tree' was thereby formed - a Kibbo Kift family unit. Marriages within the unit were celebrated and encouraged and throughout the 1920s and indeed in much of the early Green Shirt phase, the Kindred was (like the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry) very much a family based organisation: "Our real method of expansion will be through the Roof-Tree. With born Kibbo Kift men and women forming Roof-Trees, we shall see the Bloodline of the Kibbo Kift take its natural evolutionary course." ⁷

Hargrave's view of the Kin as an élite, owed a great deal to the Utopian speculations of H.G. Wells, particularly in books such as *A Modern Utopia*, first published in 1905 and *Men Like Gods* which appeared much later in 1923. In the first book, Wells speaks of the new 'nobility' as a healthy, self-governing élite of administrators who would form a new meritocracy and would be selected by rigorous physical and mental tests. For example, each year this 'New Samurai' would have to track out into the Wilderness on a solitary pilgrimage. This "annual dose of sublimity" would provide a "spiritual core for utilitarian discipline" and would offset any "temptations of power".⁸ Coming from the professional classes these Fabian-style "experts" would enforce a rigid discipline and a firm moral code that would act as a check on any abuses of power. These 'Guardians' of the Utopian society were to be architects of a harmonised, ordered new society based on four types of human: the 'Poetic', 'Kinetic', 'Dull' and 'Base'. One of the central messages of the book was that this 'Modern Utopia' could only be brought about on an international scale. Fabians needed to look beyond the local and national limits of social and political reform, towards a world perspective and an internationalist viewpoint.⁹

The New Samurai would however take power gradually, Fabian-style, step by step “absorbing the whole body of humanity into its discipline.”¹⁰ It is significant that White Fox’s ceremonial white, purple-lined Kibbo Kift robe, was described as the dress of the Samurai. The hero of *Men Like Gods*, ‘Mr. Barnstaple’, was widely seen as reflecting the Kibbo Kift outlook; the somewhat disaffected editor of a Liberal political journal who had hoped for “enormous things in the days of President Wilson” and who is inspired by the marvellous world he manages to stumble into. Here, semi-nude ‘Utopians’, described by Wells as “the Beautiful People”, eat wholesome foods, communicate via a form of extra-sensory perception and employ rigorous methods of birth control, not for the sake of promiscuity, but in order to improve the racial strain. Meantime, noiseless aeroplanes float overhead.¹¹

The impact of Wells on the vision that the Kibbo Kift had of itself was immense. Wells had been the chief advocate of an integrated world state to which the Kin heartily subscribed. Throughout his expansive career he spoke of the pivotal importance of education, science and social service in challenging the old iniquities of the Victorian nineteenth century. He was a staunch advocate that future worlds should be liberated from petty nationalist and chauvinistic prejudices. Wells helped to create a mental world in which the Kindred reached new heights of ambition and fancy.

Critics of Wells have tended to label him as the pre-war, arch-apostle of a crude materialism and crass belief in ‘progress’ that were immediately invalidated owing to the crisis of civilisation emanating from the fields of Flanders. The Woodcrafters kept faith with Wells and fused his scientific and social optimism with an intense and somewhat contradictory neo-Romantic

nature worship. 'Blue Swift' spoke for many in the Kindred when he evoked the stories of 'the Age of Power' in typically Wellsian tones, "The great steamship ploughs the waves, overcoming distance and bringing the world into one great intermingling community..." Oil, gas, electricity, aviation, the submarine, the motor-car were all positive benefits to the ideal of World Unity: "No, we need not fear our unruly servant the machine, by its mastery we shall rebuild the world according to our best dreams." ¹²

In many ways Wells evoked a pre-war world that contributed much to Woodcraft's intellectual background. Woodcraft was not solely inspired by the Imperial adventures of Baden-Powell and Rider Haggard and it did not only come from the South African *veld* and American Prairies. It was also to be found in the host of popular 'teach-yourself' and sixpenny editions on science, geology, philosophy and literature that filled the shelves of provincial and suburban libraries, working mens' colleges, socialist societies and the Polytechnics, where an earnest audience of the lower to upper working and middle classes clamoured for self education and 'improvement'.

This was the intense world as described by George Bernard Shaw and by E.M. Forster in *Howards End*. In the latter the character 'Leonard Bast', an insurance clerk, seeks to educate himself by "reading the English Literary Classics and going to symphony concerts."¹³ Bast displays the dual need for both physical and mental improvement by undertaking a strenuous physical ordeal in walking from Wimbledon Underground station right through the night to the North Downs, "There's been a lot of talk at the office lately about these things... the fellows there, said one steers by the Pole Star."¹⁴

Another good example of the culture of suburbanite clerks can be found in Shan F. Bullock's novel *Robert Thorne: The Story of a London Clerk*, published in 1907. As Carey notes, our hero 'Thorne', a clerk in a tax office, living near Denmark Hill "makes strenuous attempts at self education. He vows to read a good book every month and to spend Saturday afternoons in the National Gallery or the British Museum..." Thorne wrestles with 'Paradise Lost' and Bacon's 'Essays' over his supper of cocoa, bread and cheese.¹⁵

The popular representation of the clerk as a symbol for the world of the cramped, repressed, sedentary suburbanite and the office worker, was one which captured physical, as well as intellectual limitations. The clerk, confined to a desk or ledger all day was physically stunted. Leonard Bast has a "spine that might have been straight" and "a chest that might have been broadened" if only his family had not deserted their rural, healthy roots to come to the city.¹⁶ In contrast, Eileen Golding in the 1930s, saw herself as part of a hiking 'craze' and Helen Corke, a pre-war post-office clerk living in Croydon, wrote to her "fellow pupil-teacher", a one D.H. Lawrence, of the joy in discovering the "Open-Air philosophy" of Richard Jeffries, whilst exploring the North Downs; "Electric trams will carry us as far as Purley or Wimbledon; Purley is the jumping-off spot for a day on the Downs.... We shake the dust of the city from our feet, and turn southwards to walk miles of turf and track, to laze in a hay-meadow, to eat sandwiches sitting on the low, rounded wall of an old churchyard."¹⁷ Leslie Paul, in his autobiography tells how, when he first worked as a clerk for the International Tea Company in Mitre Square, followed by a stint selling advertising space for his father's company in Fleet Street, he would secretly read Richard Jeffries and go adventuring under canvas at the weekend. Paul also

inevitably read the popular science books and scientific romances of H.G. Wells.

George Orwell, from the vantage point of 1941, paid tribute to the blast of fresh air that H.G. Wells, son of a Bromley shopkeeper, brought to Edwardian culture,

Back in the nineteen hundreds, it was a wonderful experience for a boy to discover H.G. Wells. There you were, in a world of pedants, clergymen and golfers, with your future employers exhorting you to 'get on or get out', your parents systematically warping your sex life and your dull-witted schoolmasters sniggering over their Latin tags; and here was this wonderful man who could tell you about the inhabitants of the planets and the bottom of the sea, and who knew that the future was not going to be as respectable people imagined.¹⁸

Wells himself was a self-made intellectual and his amateurism proved to be a distinct advantage when it came to scientific predictions about the future where he was able to "outguess the professors."¹⁹ Malcolm Muggeridge recalled his childhood (again in Croydon) where his father, a City clerk would read edifying passages from William Morris's rural socialist, Utopian fantasy *News From Nowhere* and poems from *The Earthly Paradise*.²⁰

Hargrave too was a participant in the culture of self-education. He left school at twelve years old and was educated at home mainly with the aid of his father. It was owing to Gordon Hargrave that White Fox developed his eclectic tastes for anthropology, religious mysticism and sociology. Wells also provided an excellent source of educational material.

Although he never went so far as to admit it openly, Hargrave saw the Kibbo Kift in Wellsian terms, orientating itself amid received global patterns and trends and seeking to enact the slow permeation of society by 'modern' and élite superior beings. Despite having failed to turn the Fabian society in this direction, Wells had inspired a number of New Samurai-type initiatives in the

Edwardian era: Maurice Brown and Harold Munro had founded the 'Samurai Press' which drafted a 'Samurai Code' and published *Proposals for a Voluntary Nobility* in 1907. Wells shelved the idea of Samurai for some years, preferring to see the future World State as a result of a great, human, mass revolutionary process. The impact of the Great War however, demonstrated to him the need to abandon such a deterministic perspective.²¹ Instead he returned to a phrase that he had used in the 1914 edition of *Anticipations* and *The Magnificent Research* and one which he was to explore in greater detail in his 1926 novel, *The World of William Clissold*: the 'Open Conspiracy'. The *Open Conspiracy* itself was written in 1928. It was a term that greatly appealed to Hargrave in the mid-1920's when he was seeking to bring a greater definition and clarity to the Kibbo Kift. An invitation was offered to Wells and he was granted a place 'sitting' on the Advisory Council of the Kibbo Kift, although there is no evidence that he ever took part in any Kin activities.

Hargrave had a great ability, as seen in his relationship with Baden-Powell, to enthuse older men with new ideas. This is also evident in the membership list of the Advisory Council, which could boast a series of illustrious names throughout the 1920's: Havelock-Ellis, Stephen Graham, Frederick Soddy, Maurice Hewlett, Henry Nevinston and his wife Evelyn Sharp, as well as Julian Huxley. Correspondence with international figures such as Patrick Geddes led to their inclusion on the Council, as it did with Vilhjalmar Stefansson the Arctic explorer. A rash of Nobel Prize winners also participated, such as Norman Angell (Nobel Peace Prize, 1933,) Maurice Maeterlinck (Nobel Prize for Literature, 1911,) Rabindranath Tagore (Nobel Prize for

Literature, 1913,) Romain Rolland (Nobel Prize for Literature, 1915) and Alexis Carrel (Nobel Prize for Medicine and Physiology, 1912.)

The Kin agreed with Wells that a scientific modern world held the potential for human liberation. As the Kibbo Kift saw it there was a 'new mood'. In *The Great War Brings it Home*, Hargrave had associated Woodcraft with a new mood of optimism by which "the whole world was being moved by a great desire for unity."²² If, as Hargrave put it, the "Civilised Mechanical Death" of the Great War had brought to light "the fact that our great disorganised civilisation has failed", 'Owaissa' believed that "today, the nations are restless, unsettled, in a transition stage, but only the 'ignorant' see chaos, the 'wise man' discerns the beginnings of a new order."²³

Wells' 'Open Conspiracy' was to be a world-wide 'ferment' that would act as an instrument to lift humanity out of the chaos of war, poverty, irrationalism and ignorance and into a planned, collective world community. The best minds, the most capable and resolute spirits were to be recruited for the service of Humanity at large. What is more, this élite must be able to draw itself away and be segregated from the rest of Humanity. Once again, like the original New Samurai, the Open Conspirators were to enact an essentially aristocratic, rather than democratic revolution.²⁴

The Kindred too saw itself in such terms. In 1923 White Fox, in response to the question of whether or not the Kibbo Kift was a secret society, insisted that it was more like "an open conspiracy... of peaceful penetration." It is significant that Hargrave was not at this stage concerned with hastening the process, "We are not a flash-in-the-pan. The work of the Kibbo Kift (because it

is implanted in the lives of our children) will go forward long after we have all crumbled in to dust. There is plenty of time.”²⁵

The Kibbo Kift flatly rejected any “get-there-quick-by-force doctrines” of either “Red Imperialism” or “Red Revolution” or any other ‘peace by murder’ schemes. There were to be no “short cuts to Paradise.”²⁶ ‘Little Otter’ agreed, “There was plenty of time – nature was in no hurry – it had taken half a million years to create man, we had no reason to begrudge a generation or two the task of changing him.”²⁷

In 1925 Hargrave reiterated the role of the Kibbo Kift in the wider community. They were to ‘penetrate’ to “the point of direction” in their everyday lives:

It is important that the ‘key positions’ in every department of the social organisation of this country should be held by a Kinsman of the Mark. This can only be accomplished by an iron determination on the part of each Kinsman to make himself one degree more *reliable*, more *alert*, more *efficient*, and generally ‘quicker on the uptake’ than the ordinary man in the street.²⁸

Thus Hargrave emphasised once more that the Kibbo Kift were not just another leisure or camping group, but a social and political movement. Hargrave looked forward to the day when the Kibbo Kift could say,

Rolling Buffalo is one of the chief directors of the South-Western and Bink’s Bank; Green Fly owns the ‘*Saturday Express*’; Screech Owl is now a ‘star’ film actor, producing his own films; all London is flocking to see Kayak’s play ‘All The Way To Paradise For Tuppence’ at the Playtime Theatre; Star-Flame is the principal at the Cotswold Kibbo Kift School; ‘Lone Camper’ is the chief director in the O.K.U. Tea Company, the Nimrod Steel Corporation and the Anglo Shipping Company...²⁹

Kibbo Kift activity not only took inspiration from Wells’ ideal of ‘world service’, but also his liberal advocacy of education as the weapon in the battle for the World State. As a former schoolteacher, Wells was aware of the biases and inadequacies of the late Victorian and Edwardian State schooling. As

Orwell again reminds us, Wells came to prominence in a society which was, “ruled by narrow minded, profoundly incurious people, predatory businessmen, dull squires, bishops, politicians who could quote Horace, but had never heard of algebra. Science was faintly disreputable and religious belief obligatory.”³⁰

Wells wanted more technical and scientific education (after 1914 he lauded the social sciences) but also a more holistic system so that children and young adults would be able to see their societies and lives in global terms, rather than from the narrow perspective of nation-states or classes.³¹ History in particular, should concern itself with uncovering and exploring the past in world wide terms. Like an eighteenth century *philosophe*, Wells sought to write a ‘Universal History’ explaining the World in terms of the development of one biological species and the impact of economics, geography and culture on that species. He did not so much emphasise what divides the human race, as what unites it.³² Wells could not resist making the following political point in conclusion: that while all great Empires of history had been inspired by the ideal of unifying the human species, only now, thanks to the scientific and technical advances of the twentieth century, could this ‘ultimate goal’ be reached. Wells’ *The Outline of History* (1920) was written with such an aim in mind. It was to be the apotheosis of Edwardian self-education and amateurism.³³ The book was immediately popular and influential amongst the Kindred, often being cited as required reading for both Kinsfolk and those outside seeking to learn more about the Kibbo Kift. Wells in his later life also toyed with the idea of accumulating a vast reserve of knowledge, a sort of ultimate information resource, a Global Archive, a ‘World Brain’, which would integrate and

disseminate “the whole sprawling intellectual apparatus of modern civilisation.”³⁴

The Kibbo Kift made a modest contribution to such an endeavour by encouraging Lodges to undertake surveys and reports, the ultimate use of which was to be never fully explained. In 1922 Hargrave called for the creation of a Woodcraft Survey to record Campsites and local geographic data, as well as information on reliable landowners. One of the requirements of the Wander Camp Test was to make a scale map of one’s local area. White Fox himself set about a ‘Regional Survey’ chart with the assistance of ‘Ken-ea’ (Mabel Barker) Honorary Secretary of the Regional Association. Barker, who happened to be Patrick Geddes’ goddaughter, also lived at King’s Langley. Geddes was subsequently offered a seat on the Kibbo Kift’s Advisory Council and gave fulsome praise to Hargrave’s *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* on its appearance in 1927.³⁵

Regional Surveys were clearly part of the Liberal-Transcendentalist tradition with Lodges required to find about the nature and ownership of the local landscape be it public, uncultivated or privately-owned by “landowners with guns”. The Kindred explained, “When we have first-hand knowledge of the land on which we live, then we can re-shape it according to our ideals.”³⁶ This implies an examination of merely rural areas, but because the Kindred was predominantly urban with a high proportion living in the Home Counties of England, metropolitan surveys were seen as equally valuable. All such initiatives were to be pooled together in 1924 to form one ‘World Survey’ under the control of ‘Kootima’ (Maya Jowitt.) This would then yield a number of ‘Mercator’ charts showing the growth of empires, religions, myths and cultures

while also exploring geology and geography.³⁷ The World Survey was an obvious nod in the direction of the Surveys of Patrick Geddes. 'Wabasso' (Tom Wycroft) spoke of the World Survey's purpose as being to gather into one place all the information necessary for the planning of the World State of the future."³⁸ 'Death Watch' won the praises of many of the Kibbo Kift by inventing a timepiece that told 'Kibbo Kift World Time'. Again, the World Survey was part of the attempt to educate the child and adult into viewing the world in terms of the evolution of the one human race, "The child must be trained to view the world as one country and mankind as one species, albeit at differing stages of development, but one nevertheless to counteract the hidden propaganda of Imperialism."³⁹

As far as children were concerned, Hargrave insisted that the Kibbo Kift had a duty to ensure a more rounded and detailed education. Children were being denied access to full and frank discussions in every day society about such topics as sex, philosophy and religion. Lodges and leaders of children's Tribes should seek to answer commonly voiced queries and worries. 'Owaissa', a school-mistress with the Garden School at Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, declared that the purpose of education was to "lead out, (educate) the divine life" in each child. Mutual respect, love, consideration and co-operation should be encouraged with the child being made to feel able to express itself, bolstered by "fresh air" and a commitment to a "physical, not just a mental education," which would combine music, art, dance and drama. 'Little Otter' delivered an additional picture of life as a teenage 'Intellectual Savage' when he and his Woodcraft friend, 'Big Beaver', had to give a lesson on sex education to their respective *chelas* or 'disciples'. Hargrave favoured the idea of older teenage

boys giving instruction to new, younger entrants to the Kibbo Kift; this being reminiscent of Baden-Powell's approval of the Public School prefectorial system. 'Little Otter's' interview with a ten year old boy from Deptford provoked a painful silence with 'Little Otter' vainly attempting to cover his embarrassment behind the 'sophistication' of cigarette smoke. 'Big Beaver' who had by his late teens read the Koran, Freud and Blavatsky, decided to instruct his *chela* in more comfortable surroundings, amidst the pampas grass, china and 'polished mahogany' of his grandmother's drawing room. However, the *chela* took the talk badly and began to throw plates and furniture at 'Big Beaver' before threatening him with a ceremonial Eastern knife, which 'Big Beaver' had once presented to him.⁴⁰

Woodcraft was of course used to drawing upon a whole welter of cultural icons and heroes from the Edwardian era, but the Kibbo Kift in the spirit of H.G. Wells, also set about selecting a collection of 'Heroes of World Service'. These were men and women who were held up as having made a significant contribution to global communication, integration and understanding. Such figures included Dr. David Livingstone, Captain Cook and Charles Darwin who was described as being "as strenuous a Woodcrafter as anyone could wish."⁴¹ Deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice in peacetime endeavour were held to be particularly valuable, for example, Captain Robert Scott, Mallory and Irvine: 'The Martyrs of Mount Everest.'⁴² Hargrave particularly admired William Penn and made a stark comparison between the methods of the Society of Friends and the Kibbo Kift Hargrave applauded the Quaker's simplicity and their integrity which had "extended an influence over the minds of millions." The Kibbo Kift should again take heart from the "history of a small, but

powerful, minority convention acting as an instrument against certain religious, ethical and social urges.”⁴³

Such was the standing of Wells within the movement that ‘Blue Swift’ felt particularly gratified when Wells’ book *The Dream* cited the characteristics of the ‘Future Citizens’ of Wells’ Utopia as also “having a distinct resemblance” to the methods of the Kibbo Kift. Their lives were dedicated to scientific research, art, education and creative administration, as well as healthy outdoor pursuits to build strength and vigour, whilst living in a ‘state of world peace and brotherhood.’⁴⁴ Even the names of the characters had a peculiarly Woodcraft feel to them: ‘Sunray’, ‘Willow’, ‘Firefly’ and ‘Starlight’.

2. The Flowering of the Kindred

Despite the overly ambitious and intensely idealistic vision of a Wellsian World State that Hargrave set out for the Kin, many Kinsfolk found they could relate better to the Head Man’s invocation to concentrate their efforts primarily on elevating their camping and hiking into an art form.

To those outside the Kin who questioned the correlation between Woodcraft and World Peace, Hargrave insisted that camping and hiking was an actual act of social unconvention and a gesture of rebellion against industrial society. It was a positive assertion of health in the face of a system which “stifle[d] and stupifie[d] the individual.”¹ The healthier, more educated, imaginative and balanced an individual was, accordingly, the more peaceable.² According to Stephen Graham, “Tramping is at first, an act of rebellion; only

afterwards do you get free from rebelliousness as Nature sweetens your mind. Towns make men contentious, the country sweetens out their souls.”³

The present day muddle was entirely due to a lack of will power and imagination. The sciences of hiking and camping were to be carried out to the best of each Kinsman’s ability. ‘Little Otter’ and ‘Big Beaver’s’ thirty-mile night-hike was typical:

This camping must not be a picnic or a pleasant ramble through the woods and meadows. It must be more than that. It must be hard training and it must put the campers to the test. It must be a way of life and not merely a sport or pastime. This campcraft is for a very definite purpose, a purpose which must never be overlooked. It is self training for youth that they may grow strong in the open air and so begin to take their place in the joyful company of world pioneers. And let the camps be clean and well ordered, with no lolling about to no purpose, for slovenly campcraft is an indication of a slovenly mind.⁴

By the end of 1923 Hargrave was ready to publish his thoughts on how a Lodge should operate. A Lodge should be open to Kinsfolk over seventeen who had passed the appropriate tests of initiation. Lodges should have their own graded internal structure as outlined in *The Great War Brings it Home*, with a Keeper of the Fire etc. A Lodge was meant to have its own ‘Clubroom’ or private meeting space which should be suitably decorated and it was also instructed to keep a Log-Book to record the history of the Lodge. Collective camping gear could also be marshalled in this Clubroom. The Lodge would also have to design and make its own Totem, usually reflecting the purpose and name of the Lodge. (For example, the Ndembo Lodge took the sacred Scarab Beetle as its symbol, in reference to the ‘Arcane Wisdom’ of Ancient Egypt.) Popular symbols included the ‘bull horns’ symbolising strength, the Swastika for good luck and the ‘ash-keys’ of eternity. A Lodge should also have an original name, its own motto and if possible its own dance or song. A Lodge

should not necessarily be closed to people from other organisations, but it had the right to remain 'exclusive' and to select its members. A Lodge should, like Ndembo and Sadhana, dedicate itself to the study of a particular intellectual area or discipline, although it was acceptable for one Lodge to operate inside another in order to cater for varying tastes. For example, 'Little Otter' and 'Big Beaver' established the Lodge of Mendevo, or 'Men of Endeavour' within the Owl Lodge. It would be a mistake to see the Kibbo Kift as a regimented and inflexible organisation. There was a good deal of room for personal initiative and preference. Lodge activities, so long as they did not conflict with Kibbo Kift principles, were remarkably varied and wide ranging. Hargrave believed that collective involvement and group effort were vital from the point of view of individual development. Activities encouraged aside from camping and hiking, included making a Lodge visit, in costume, to a different place of worship each week in order to open oneself up to different religious perspectives, putting on a play or review for the local community, learning First Aid and Life Saving, contributing to the World Survey and studying Esperanto (as 'Green Flame' put it: "the chief aim of the Kibbo Kift will never be realised until all Kinsfolk know and use one neutral, common language.")⁵ Alternatively, "visit a Chinese restaurant and taste specimens of their cookery."⁶ This last suggestions came from 'Blue Swift' who in 1929, although having left the Kindred, compiled a stimulating list of ideas in *Practical Work in World History*. Many of these suggestions came, according to 'Blue Swift', from the activities of the Kibbo Kift, including Hargrave's Tests of the Seven Degrees, as well as from the Scouts, the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry and informal Co-Operative Woodcraft groups. As the title indicated, the ideas were meant to compliment and build

upon an appreciation of Wells' *Outline of History*. Ideas varied from the gentle, "look out for modern examples of tattooing and compare them with the savage examples in the (British) Museum", "learn to play *Mah-Jong*" and "try to work out the meaning of your dreams by psychoanalysis..." to the more demanding:

To learn about poison gas, gently sniff some chlorine and then throw wet leaves on a bonfire and stand in the smoke... (and) to get a very slight idea of war conditions, lie in a ditch containing mud and water for some time, eat hard biscuit, tinned 'bully' and plum and apple jam and drink water and tea made with water, tasting of chloride or lime. Every now and again get a friend to throw stones at you.⁷

The failure of the World Survey was an indication that by the mid-1920s, science and social science-based activities within the Kindred were not nearly as well developed as artistic and creative endeavours. This should not come as any surprise: Hargrave was a talented artist, as were all the major Woodcraft leaders, from Baden-Powell, to Ernest Thompson-Seton, the Westlakes and Leslie Paul. Woodcrafters had always relied heavily on the use of creative and imaginative play. Artistic fancy, originality and invention were the most powerful weapons in the Kibbo Kift's armoury, but Wells' 'World State' was to be led by an élite of technocrats, bureaucrats and scientific functionaries. As has been discussed, Kinsman 'The Tracker' had applauded the Woodcraft way that dismissed the use of committees, agendas, amendments and conferences. What was most vital, was the use of the 'Creative Imagination' derived from heroic modern-day classics such as *Treasure Island* and *Kim*. The mission of the Kibbo Kift was to inspire world youth with a 'New Duty' and as part of this, the 'dry-as-dust' adult cynic had been instructed by 'The Tracker' to re-read Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* and *The Golden Age*.⁸

This was the 'magick' which Woodcraft proudly saw as its greatest achievement. Thus the Kibbo Kift made great efforts to augment the imaginative

and creative efforts of both the individual and the collective within the movement. First, Hargrave's constant bid to modify and refine the Kin Habit was an attempt to create a dress both practical for outdoor living and one that corresponded with the 'spirit' of the movement. The costume of jerkin and cowl reflected a "universal form" of dress (or at least a Medieval European one) denoting simplicity, practicality and efficiency, whilst the strict banning of individual variations spoke of the Kin's "unity of purpose".⁹ The uniform and indeed the use of the Woodcraft names also had the effect (long since recognised by the Army) of nullifying "the impact of social class and positions within the outside world."¹⁰ It was a way of kin members reinventing themselves and then projecting themselves into an heroic, colourful and purposeful world which was denied to the conventional, grey, bowler-hatted mortal. The fact that Woodcraft names were taboo, that they had to be officially registered and were never to be used outside the realms of the Kindred, all added to the mystique of the movement. All of this could only deepen the ever-widening gulf between the everyday world and the committed life inside the Kin, manifested during weekends, Public Holiday Hikes or Camps.

Though the habit, hand-made by Kinsfolk themselves, was to be free from personal touches, the hiking and camp gear was to be as highly decorated as possible. Those dextrous and self reliant enough were even encouraged to attempt making their own rucksacks, belts and moccasins (for use in camp) and lightweight tents. As has been discussed earlier, camp design and ritual had become increasingly important, inspired by Hargrave's anthropological readings. Post-war Woodcraft sought to further idealise the culture of the Edwardian Open-Air tradition. The icons of the Camp Life were elevated and

celebrated. The Campfire, “the altar of the open-air life” according to Stephen Graham and further immortalised by Robert Louis Stevenson, was transformed into the ‘Sacred Council Fire’ surrounded by an elaborate ritual.¹¹ The paraphernalia of camping took on symbolic resonance; the staff became a symbol of will and rugged determination, the rucksack, with its veiled suggestion of ‘Christian’s Burden’ in *Pilgrim’s Progress* became, as Graham saw it, a “confession of mortality.” He described the ‘tramp’ as a ‘life wanderer’, ‘a pilgrim’, a ‘spiritual adventurer’, once again locating walking and wandering firmly in the Liberal Transcendentalist tradition.¹² Even the very physique, deportment and appearance of Kinsfolk became too important for Hargrave to ignore. If the Kin were to transform society from the “bottom upwards via living example”, then their lives, or at least their Kibbo Kift lives, were to be as near to a ‘work of art’ as possible. This was not something unique to the Kibbo Kift or wider Woodcraft Movement specifically. There had been a definite air of self-improvement and self-discipline pervading both the pre and post-war Open-Air movement. In the journal *Camping*, one Edwardian enthusiast promoted the cult of ‘hardihood’, complaining that the ‘spirit of camping’ was in danger of becoming subsumed by the “refinements and unnecessary luxuries” with which a certain type of modern day camper was wont to surround himself. Another asserted the benefits of ‘bivouacking’ which enabled one to sleep out without the need for a canvas tent; all one actually needed was a spade or trowel for one’s hip bone.¹³ To Hargrave, ordinary every day routine activities and camp or hike, had to be elevated into a transcendental light. The way one spoke, ate and walked had a bearing on one’s own personal development as a Kinsman. In speech, the correct Woodcraft vocabulary should

be used, which tended to be as picturesque and romantic as possible. For example, 'God' was replaced by 'Great Mystery'. Hargrave was also interested in yoga techniques as a way of calming and balancing the mental process and seeking intuitive wisdom. As he said: "To be able to make the mind 'one pointed', to fix your thoughts on one theme, one subject, and to be able to switch it off at will, that is power and true wisdom." ¹⁴

Thus, one should never be afraid of silence, one should be clear and simple, be calm and measured in one's communication with others; one should never show anger, excitement, or panic. One should attempt to walk with lightness, poise and grace; one should go to bed early and rise early, eat plain and simple foods, as well as sleep out of doors whenever possible. One should not slouch and one should avoid the "brainless and silly" mouth open expression.¹⁵ These instructions bore a distinct resemblance to traditional Scouting invocations to 'smile' and 'be cheery' (or have a cheery whistle on one's lips) at all times. Kinsfolk should laugh heartily, not giggle or snigger.

The Kibbo Kift was the most colourful and artistically proficient of all the Woodcraft groups in the inter-war years. They not only designed their own costumes, camps and totem poles, but also set about creating a large and elaborate collection of banners, ceremonial equipment and annotated motifs. These included an Anglo-Saxon style 'Wooden Plough', built by 'Eagle Eye' of the Quercus Lodge, a Kin Psalter, a book of Kibbo Kift nursery rhymes and a replica model of the Piltdown Skull which was mounted in a five foot, carved oak standard worked by the High Tor Lodge.

Hargrave was a man who would suddenly pick up a subject, become very enthusiastic about, only then to drop it. For example, the Piltdown

‘discovery’ of 1908 was to become the focus of great excitement within the Kindred. In July 1924, a party of the Kibbo Kift marched to the Natural History Museum carrying the plaster cast of the famous skull, to attend a lecture on human fossils: “the halls of the Museum were made to ring with a mighty ‘How’!”¹⁶ The following Saturday, the ‘skull’ was taken to Barkham Manor Farm, Piltdown, where a ceremony watched by the anthropologist Sir Arthur Smith-Woodward, the famous geologist and anthropologist who had carried out the original diggings at the site with a young Jesuit priest, Teilhard de Chardin, as well as two German Youth Movement delegates. A Kin Token, in the form of the Egyptian ‘Ka’ symbol, was laid on the site. The Kinfolk then set off back to London, “fortified to carry on their lifelong struggle towards the Unification of Humankind by their ennobling communion with their primeval sub-human ancestor, Eoanthropus Dawsanii, the Man of the Dawn.”¹⁷

It was widely accepted by the Kin that their ‘scientific’ development was woefully inadequate in comparison to their artistic side. Hargrave and Kootima’s World Survey had fizzled out. *Wandlelog*, the journal of the South London Kibbo Kift Lodges (or ‘Wandlething’) commented in 1926 that the Kindred had produced, “little or nothing in the nature of scientific research”¹⁸ In contrast Kin drama, art and music was extremely well represented. Mumming plays came to be particularly favoured. They were Medieval-style, didactic ‘mystery plays’, with stylised characters representing ideals or moral values. Modernist realism was frowned upon. The costume, scenery and script were heavily exaggerated, simple and symbolic and the plays were to be performed out of doors if possible. Bright and colourful, these plays were designed to act as a vehicle for propaganda, highlighted by such titles as, *The Machine Masters*

and *The Pilgrim*. Needless to say, Hargrave always preferred the Kinsfolk to write their own plays. 'Sea Otter' (Joyce Reason) was a prolific Kin dramatist and then went on to write a collection of children's stories set in pre-historic times including, *Dwifa's Curse* and *Bran the Bronze Smith*. 'Blue Swift', another future prolific children's author, contributed a number of plays to the Kindred including *Flight* (an exploration of the fascination with flight from Daedalus onwards) and *The Coming of the Shining One* (which drew parallels between the discovery of fire and the discovery of steam power.) Many of these plays were taken around the country by the Kin's 'Cynstoke Mummers', the first Kibbo Kift Wayside Mumming Group, who performed in the open air with the barest minimum of costume and scenery. There was also an attempt to develop puppetry and puppet shows within the context of Kin drama, again with distinctive Kin themes. Such dramatic activities, along with song and dance would be performed at so-called 'Gleemotes', designated ceremonial performances at a Kin gathering. For the benefit of public entertainment and as a source of funding, 'Wapenshaws', a kind of Kin revue, were also organised by several Lodges acting in concert at which presentations and handicrafts would be displayed. Poetry was also encouraged with the annual 'Skaldic' contest held at the Althing. Poems were required to conform to a traditional Anglo-Saxon metre and to be recited in front of the Council Fire. The winner would be honoured by receiving the Skaldic Staff. Song too was very important to the Kindred. Much of the early compositions and arrangements were by 'Rolf the Ranger' (Rolf Gardiner,) a young Cambridge graduate. Old English folk songs were favoured alongside specifically written hiking songs for the Kindred. The most famous was Rolf Gardiner's 'All Hael', sung to the tune of 'The Monk's

March'. By the mid 1920s, a Kibbo Kift Song Book had been produced with a large collection of original compositions, written largely by White Fox or 'Hawk'.¹⁹

Yet despite the intense and original artistic creativity within the Kin, the Head Man's interests were beginning to broaden. Thus, accordingly, it was expected that the interests of the Kindred should also.

3. Woodcraft and Social Credit

White Fox was pleased with this artistic flowering of the Kindred, yet he was growing increasingly restless concerning the actual direction of the movement. The withdrawal of the Left/Co-operative sections in 1924 had consolidated his position and done much to distinguish the ideals of the Kin. The adoption of a Wellsian perspective on the world had provided some form of focus, method, structure and organisation, making the movement more defined and uniform, but Hargrave still felt that the Kibbo Kift was unclear of its ultimate mission. A more concrete expression was needed if the Kin were to successfully fulfil its role as the "human instrument" operating "as a directive force of the progress for the race."¹

The answer that gradually came to Hargrave and opened up for him the third great phase in his life, has again been shrouded in Kibbo Kift style secrecy and legend. The new focus was to lend weight to the Wellsian 'Open Conspiracy' of the Kibbo Kift and the result was to virtually rip the Kindred apart. Economics was finally to supersede and eclipse Woodcraft as the Kibbo

Kift's method, resulting in the birth of a qualitatively different organisation: the Green Shirt Movement for Social Credit.

The historian, John Finlay, spoke of Hargrave's realisation that his was a movement "of one pure action, a reflex devoid of intelligent purpose".² Hargrave withdrew to the Welsh mountains in the late summer of 1924 with his most trusted lieutenant, 'Little Lone Wolf', for the "purpose of placing the body under severe hardship and constraint" and for private meditation and discussion³. The result was that the December issue of *The Nomad*, "without any preparatory message", invited adult Kinsfolk to start reading books on the so-called 'New Economics', including *Economic Democracy*, and *Credit, Power and Democracy*, both by C. H. Douglas, *Dividends for All*, by W. Allen Young and Frederick Soddy's *Cartesian Economics* and *The Inversion of the Science*. Hargrave's *Letters to the Kindred* went on to proclaim the old Catholic principle of the 'Just Price' and the need for the Kibbo Kift to learn about the money power-brokers, those 'International Money Lenders' who are a "little band of ghouls who flit noiselessly behind the books and the exchanges of the world."⁴ Finlay suggests that the person responsible for 'sowing the seed' of Social Credit in White Fox's mind was not 'Little Lone Wolf', but Rolf Gardiner. Whilst Rolf Gardiner was to become involved in a 'Social Credit Study Circle' which had been established at Cambridge University in 1920, it is by no means clear that Gardiner was the agent for its inception within the Kibbo Kift. Under Gardiner's editorship articles by Major C. H. Douglas and, indeed by Hargrave, were published and discussed in *Youth*, but a number of sources questioned the role Gardiner played in this part of the Kibbo Kift's development. One ex-Kinsman and Green Shirt, 'Bill' Tacey ('Will Scarlet')

pointed the finger in the direction of Colin Hurry, director of Carleton Studios, an advertising agency for which Hargrave was now working.⁵ However, there is no reason why any one person should be cited as converting Hargrave. In the light of the future row and hostilities between Hargrave and Gardiner, there could have been ample reason for playing down Gardiner's influence in the movement. On the other hand, there is no evidence whatsoever that Gardiner developed his Social Credit ideas beyond his University days which ended in 1923 and none that links him with the wider Social Credit movement in the 1920s and 1930s.

Hargrave's conversion to Social Credit was slow and wary. He realised the need to tread softly and cautiously within his own movement. Any attempt to impose such a drastic new direction on the nebulous Kibbo Kift would demand great skill and tact, especially in the light of the Co-Operative departure of 1924. However, the value of such a change to the Kin would be immense: Hargrave was determined to direct the 'Open Conspiracy' of the 'Active Few' towards spearheading the Social Credit movement. This was to be revealed to the Kindred and his closest lieutenants in very small doses. Hargrave's mentor for private investigation and study of Social Credit seems to have been the former editor of *Credit Power*, Arthur Brenton, who in 1923 took over the editorship of *The New Age*, replacing W.A. Moore, who had been criticised by Arthur Kitson and other monetary reformers.⁶

The Social Credit movement in Britain at this time was still relatively obscure. Major C. H. Douglas, the founder of Social Credit theory, was a former engineer who had worked in India, Latin America and South Africa for various railway companies. He had gone on to become Assistant Director of the Royal

Aircraft Works at Farnborough during the Great War. His time at Farnborough led him to make a radical appraisal of the 'crisis' at the heart of capitalism that differed to the ideas promoted by Marx and Keynes.⁷ The crux of Social Credit was the denial of the classic Free Market assertion by Jean Baptiste Say, that supply would always equal demand. Rather, the wages and salaries dispensed by an individual firm would always prove inadequate in purchasing that firm's product. This 'leakage' in purchasing power was caused by the demands of finance capitalism, with money being paid out in interest charges and bank charges. The solution, as Bramwell has explained, lay in the State issuing "credit to make up the difference, thus providing sufficient purchasing power to keep the economy going and providing it to the productive worker."⁸ As Social Credit developed, it was asserted that the shortage in consumer buying power would be alleviated by the creation of a 'National Credit Office', thereby nationalising credit and issuing a National Dividend to each consumer, as well as applying the 'Scientific Price Adjustment'.

Douglas aired his views at the end of the war in the *English Review* and in Holbrook Jackson's *The Organiser*. They were soon picked up by Alfred Orage, the influential and charismatic editor of *The New Age*. Orage was also working closely with Arthur Penty, the Guild Socialist theorist, who had re-evoked the medieval concept of the Just Price and the condemnation of usury in his 1906 work *The Restoration of the Gild System*. This had also celebrated medieval Christian society as the pinnacle of Western Civilisation and saw Guild Socialism as a practical application of Ruskin's and Morris's teachings. Penty was a trained architect whose father's business had collapsed in 1901 resulting in his going to work in Hampstead Garden Suburb. He had originally

met Orage, then an impoverished schoolmaster in Leeds, and together they set about disseminating Guild Socialism among traditional arts and crafts quarters. Limited success was achieved with the Junior Art Workers Guild in 1906 and with the aid of another friend of Orage's, Holbrook Jackson, an Arts Group was also established within the Fabian Society, although this was short lived. *The New Age*, however was the single most important initiative by Orage and Jackson for the popularising of Guild theory.⁹ In 1914, Orage was to edit *National Guilds*, which firmly planted Guild Socialism within the idealist New Age context:

The abolition of the wage system involves not merely an economic revolution, but *ex hypothesi*, a spiritual revolution also. A spiritual revolution, indeed, will be necessary as a precedent condition of the economic revolution, for we are not so blind to the lessons of history as to imagine that an economic revolution for the better can be engineered by force alone.¹⁰

The New Age was to patronise a number of other proponents of so-called 'ethical economics' alongside Douglas, notably Arthur Kitson, the inventor and Frederick Soddy, the atomic physicist and collaborator of Ernest Rutherford. Kitson wrote *The Money Problem* in 1894 and went on to found the Currency Reform League which opposed the Gold Standard and advocated an early form of decimalization. Soddy, who was made a fellow of the Royal Society in 1910, asserted in his *Wealth, Virtual Wealth and Debt*, that "economics should be founded in thermo-dynamics and that energy, based on the sun, was the paramount factor."¹¹ Though differing on technicalities, much of Kitson's, Soddy's and Douglas' analyses were remarkably similar as to were the solutions they proffered. 'Monetary Reform', Soddy's 'Energy Economics' and Social Credit, proved to be an appetiser for avant-garde groups, the political underground and unorthodox opinion, in Britain, the Empire and in Europe. The

identification of the banking system as the 'root of all evil', proved a delight to the interests of many, from the farmers of the Dominions, to Silvio Gesell, a member of the 1919 Munich Soviet, as well as Gottfried Feder, one of the earliest members of the National Socialist German Workers Party, whose lectures on economics were listened to by an avid Adolf Hitler in the early 1920s.

Social Credit also had a distinctly 'Illuminated' quality to it. Being discussed and promulgated in the pages of *The New Age* it also began to be debated in Theosophical, High Anglican and Catholic circles who saw it as part of the recent revival in 'Christian economics'.¹² There was something of the search for 'primal unity', a common feature of occult initiatives within Social Credit: the 'hidden key' that would unlock the secrets of the (economic) universe. This was the key that would open the gates to the Promised Kingdom of freedom and abundance. Hargrave spoke of Social Credit as a simple, indestructible 'Truth'. The old Quaker saying, 'God's Providence is mine inheritance', was seen by Hargrave as a fitting motto for the Social Credit movement. As he said, "I believe that the Kingdom of Heaven (Paradise) is perfectly possible... I believe that Social Credit is the key that will open the door to what may seem like 'paradise' to us, but will seem no more than a free and normal life to those born into a debt-free community." ¹³

Douglas himself tended increasingly to use metaphors concerning the forces of 'Light' and 'Darkness' battling each other in relation to the Social Credit campaign. 'Dark Lords' were behind the hidden hand of finance. By the late 1930s, Douglas was to have resorted, in his frustration at the slow pace of Social Credit progress, to crude anti-Semitic assertions that Social Credit was

the weapon of Christianity in the coming apocalyptic battle against the ‘infernal Jew’. He may have come to such conclusions due to the influence of Arthur Kitson, who had responded to anti-Jewish ideas in the 1920s owing to his own business problems at ‘Kitson’s Lights’, based in the Lincolnshire market town of Stamford, which manufactured and supplied lamps for lighthouses. At local monetary reform meetings Kitson recommended his audience read the infamous ‘exposé’ of the Jewish international conspiracy contained in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Kitson happened to be a member of Henry Hamilton Beamish’s ‘Britons’ organisation, a popular starting point for many of the inter-war generation of British Fascists and fellow-travellers. Kitson also has the dubious accolade of ‘lifting the veil’ from the eyes of Arnold Leese (a former officer in the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, who had specialised in camel diseases, but who had set up a practice in Stamford after the Great War) and alerting him to ‘the Jewish menace’. Leese went on to found the Imperial Fascist League, an organisation so anti-Semitic it reviled Mosley’s British Union as “kosher Fascists.”¹⁴ As shall be seen later, Hargrave, despite his growing belief in Social Credit and to a certain extent, some form of international financial conspiracy, never stooped so low as to blame the Jews.

However, Douglas was in fact very reluctant to seek a political solution for the implementation of Social Credit. Rather, he personally favoured a strategy of quiet persuasion and the demonstration of the ‘scientific’ truth of Social Credit. Attempts at popularising this intricate and complex theory would only distort and bastardise it. So Hargrave had the task ahead of, not only winning over his own movement to Social Credit, but winning the confidence and hence official recognition of Major Douglas as well.

Hargrave's clandestine study of Social Credit began in 1924. Despite his invocation to the Kindred to begin their own exploration of the 'New Economics' in December 1924 and the call for the European Youth movement to embrace a common policy on the Just Price in April 1924, it was not until August 1926 that Social Credit was mentioned openly: "We believe in Social Credit, the Just Price and the release of the individual from the position of machine minder."¹⁵ Even at this point there was no attempt to make Social Credit an official part of Kin policy. Hargrave, not just wanting the Kibbo Kift to read up on the subject, gradually began to give small lessons on 'monetary reform' in Kin literature. In June 1927 he bravely attempted to make the Just Price understandable and interesting to the Kibbo Kift Tribes, by using a lengthy children's story about a baker baking too many loaves.¹⁶ Lodges were also taking the initiative with North London's 'Watling Lodge of Indoctrination' inviting the famous Social Creditor, the Reverend V. A. Demant, to give them a series of lectures on economics. There was no real indication of the method or role by which Woodcraft would be superseded in the movement by monetary reform yet White Fox was preparing the ground. He was not only observing the Social Credit movement, such as it was, in order to allocate a role for the Kindred at its helm, but he was also beginning the process of adapting the Kin as a suitable vehicle for the Social Credit message.

Hargrave's vision of the role of the Kindred as an 'Active Few' began to make more sense in the light of this embryonic economic perspective. It certainly made Kin policy more definite and concrete. Hargrave felt that the Kin should no longer be merely introspective, but, rather, he began to look at their position within the wider society, with a view to playing a more revolutionary

role within that environment. The time of withdrawal, of ‘splendid isolation’ from the world was coming to a close. The first major indicator of a change in White Fox’s attitude was the dropping of the Kin’s ‘gradualist approach’. The Kin could wait no longer for the course of evolution to help lift the Intellectual Savage into its natural hierarchical position. Instead, the crisis was hastening the need for the Kin to prepare to act as an Active Few. The gradual biological evolution of human history was not to be seen as “an even flow”, but rather, as being periodically upset by “sudden jolts”, which represented either the ending of something or a new beginning. However, the important point for Kinsfolk to note was that, “these breaks or jumps were never brought about except by use of force.” White Fox then sought to appease pacifists within the Kindred by asserting that ‘force’ can be interpreted in many different ways, such as ‘passive resistance’, ‘force of logic or argument’, etc. Yet the Kin must realise, that in the last instance, when there is “checkmate” between those with and those without and “vital economic issues” are at stake, that revolutionary force would be a matter of “biological necessity.” As to the question whether or not such a scenario could occur in Britain, Hargrave did not commit himself but the message was clear: they must be prepared to fight hard “for public control of the Community’s Credit.”¹⁷

The Kibbo Kift was no longer a ‘container’ for the convenience of its members, but an instrument for World Service. According to Hargrave, history proved the need for “little gangs of fanatics”, “human instruments” who were needed to shape human development. The Kin would assert that: “this is the day of small closed groups swaying the emotions of the Great Masses; this is the day

of *Sinn Fein, Bolsheviki, Fascismo, Young Turks, Awakening Magyars, the Koomintang, Ku Klux Klan* and a thousand others...”¹⁸

The collapse of Western Civilisation was a distinct possibility and the Kibbo Kift had to be prepared. Referring to ‘the Conference for World Power’, a gathering of global energy economists at Wembley in July 1924, Hargrave said that the Kibbo Kift was “conscious of the warnings uttered by the most able and disinterested thinkers, of the dangers of further national collapses plunging whole populations into misery and desolation.”¹⁹

Therefore more discipline was needed, as well as more ‘fanaticism’: the spirit of the Kin should infect one’s whole life. White Fox told of a Kinsman schoolmaster who was displaying the right spirit:

Here we have a Kinsman whose Kibbo Kift work is carried right into every activity of his life. It is not merely a matter of a weekend camp now and again, with the rest of life having no connection with the Kibbo Kift. Every movement links itself with the philosophic basis of the Kin, not just as a part-time recreation for his own pleasure.²⁰

The Kibbo Kift should now be able to find its way into the ‘life-stream’ of the individual: “those who do not feel themselves consumed, swallowed up, released, set free from idiosyncratic impedimenta and are unable to make the necessary projection in some form of Art, Science or Philosophy, have mistaken the Kibbo Kift for a Rambling Club or a Holiday Camper’s Fellowship or Debating Society.”²¹

Physical health and strength could be improved upon. Levels of endurance and self-control could be heightened. North London Lodges (the ‘Watlingthing’) held a special all-male training camp at Nyn Park, in Hertfordshire. This saw ‘Green Flame’ leading the ‘Men of Camp Hardihood’ through an all-night vigil. South London Lodges (the ‘Wandlething’) responded

with a similar 'Hold of Proving', a three day winter camp with Christmas Day 1927, spent conducting Woodcraft and tracking exercises in the driving rain and snow, before an evening Yule Feast of roast beef.²²

The General Strike of 1926, a peculiarly British manifestation of short-lived radicalism and social panic, stirred the Kibbo Kift into greater efforts of 'watchfulness'. Just as Baden-Powell had famously scorched the motto 'Be Prepared' into the minds of the Boy Scouts, so Hargrave exhorted his followers to be ever ready. The one weapon that would prove invaluable in the coming social and political collapse was mobility. The Kin took great pride in the self-contained flexibility of its units. Rather like the early fathers of the Christian church, Kinsfolk were instructed not to concentrate on material possessions in the here and now, but rather, they should be ready to drop everything, pack their essential kit and leave to perform some 'unnamed' mission at the behest of the Head Man. At Kin gatherings, tents were pitched on a given command and with great speed and precision. Competitions were held for the fastest packing of a rucksack. A sizeable camp gathering of several dozen Kinsfolk could be struck and the site cleared within thirty minutes.²³ Yet the General Strike had pointed out dangerous weaknesses in the Kibbo Kift's communications and transport strategies. The Althing of 1926 therefore proposed the creation of a Kibbo Kift cycle unit to serve as despatch riders between the Head Man in Hertfordshire and the Council in London. It was also suggested that each member of Kindred should set aside an emergency food ration and make all efforts possible to procure a wireless set. A Kibbo Kift questionnaire asked if any Kinsfolk possessed or could obtain the use of a car, motorcycle or bicycle. As early as November 1925 Hargrave had presented a diagnosis of the current political

situation. Wars and civil wars in the modern age were the result of the “development of Power-driven Machinery and the World scramble for Raw Materials which constitute the prime factors governing all political activity today.” The world that has been revolutionised by the nineteenth century Mechanical Revolution had, as of yet, failed to adapt any “parallel reorganisation in administrative method”. Hargrave predicted a growing disillusionment with constitutional, democratic government on both the Left and Right. This would lead to a tendency to resort to unconstitutional methods by an increasingly incoherent Conservative Party in order “to maintain the present social system,” and by a frustrated Labour Party in order to “destroy it”. The lack of “inventive genius” progressively displayed by Conservatives, Labour, Liberals and Communists would lead the British people to disillusionment concerning the “obsolete democratic machinery of the House of Commons.” Only then would they be receptive to the idea of “control by experts at the point of direction co-ordinated by an efficiency supervisor.”²⁴ This rule by technological and administrative ‘experts’ certainly smacks of Fascist ideology, but Hargrave asserted that the Kin’s philosophy of individual freedom resulting from automatic economic liberation, would counteract any practical similarities between the Kin and Fascist Corporatism. So while the Kindred admired much of the discipline, enthusiasm and general impetus of the *Fascismo*, they also recognised that the latter would provide no real alternative to the tyranny of international finance.²⁵

Again there was something of the Wellsian apocalyptic vision of the future collapse of civilisation about this. ‘Blue Swift’ declared:

The last War was nothing compared to possible Wars of the future. This country is exceptionally open to destruction, depending as it does, on food

obtained from overseas. If this were to be cut off, there would come famine and appalling social disintegration as the starving hosts of townspeople spread ravaging across the country²⁶.

In 1927 Hargrave discussed the possibility of a 'Noah's Ark Policy' within the Kibbo Kift. This referred to the provision of localised plans or regional schemes within the Kindred that would contribute to the survival of communities during "the flood of a disintegrating period of human association." Civilisation was showing "ominous signs of possible, if not probable collapse and the Kindred should be prepared to come forward as local and regional leaders for the community in the event of a breakdown of both local and national government."²⁷

This outline of an idea was coupled with a much stronger initiative from Hargrave who planned for the creation of a permanent site for the purposes of the Kin. The movement needed a "hearth space" that could act as a "university, monastery, lamasery, (and) house of self-initiation." Such a place, 'Kin Garth', would be a "place of retreat from the World." It would have pools, libraries, 'handicrafts sheds', a 'Sungarth', as well as the administrative Headquarters of the Kibbo Kift council. Fields and pasture would be utilised, but this was to be more Wellsian than Tolstoyan. Hargrave objected to the flavour and atmosphere of what he described as those "ramshackle smallholdings" and "assorted plots" which were characteristic of 1920s, as people sought their own privatised way 'Back-to-the-Land'. Kin Garth was to display the discipline, cleanliness and 'spirit' of the movement, not becoming some "go-as-you-please huddle of odd folk with conflicting fads, putting up shanties and make-shift bungalows of old railway carriages, broken down caravans and tarred felting."²⁸ Rather, it would be a centre for all liberal arts and sciences with a central Mote Hall open to the

sky for the ‘Socratic’ method of discussion. A Kin theatre would also be built.²⁹ Just as the Boy Scouts benefited enormously from the acquisition of Gilwell Park, so the “youngsters will have their own camp site in the Tribal Training Ground, where they will practise all the primitive scouting and woodcraft which has been developed by Ernest Thompson Seton, Sir Robert Baden-Powell and others.”³⁰

Finally, in a time of national emergency, Kin Garth “might become the centre in which a Noah’s Ark Policy could be formulated. It might become a refuge or sanctuary, safeguarding a certain body of ideas, just as the monasteries were the repositories of cultural traditions which might otherwise have been lost in the confusion of the Dark Ages.”³¹

Kin Garth was to fill the columns of much Kibbo Kift literature in the mid to late 1920s. ‘Mingan’, the Chief Tally Keeper, cajoled, begged and bullied Kinsfolk for money while they were also exhorted to ever greater fundraising efforts at Wapenshaws. The occasional letter would also be received detailing a derelict farm that showed potential. It was Hargrave’s plan that the Kindred would actually build Kin Garth itself, in the manner of a revivalist church. It came to nothing. The change in policy by the end of the 1920s put paid to such ideas. The nearest the Kin ever got to their Grecian ideal was in 1932 when they acquired the Green Shirt Headquarters at Jewry Terrace in east London, a mundane collection of a few offices, a small lecture hall and a canteen.³²

The slowly intensifying preoccupation with the economics issue and its accompanying ‘political’ mood, began to have an effect on the party as early as 1926. ‘Mingan’ left the Kibbo Kift Council and then the movement early that

year and 'Eagle Eye', the Chief Campswarden and an influential figure, followed in December 1926. 'Armadillo' (Maud Beatty) the only woman to sit on the Kin Council was also to depart. The Garden School at Ballinger withdrew its affiliation with the Kibbo Kift and others soon followed, not in response to the new 'toughening up' of the Kin, but in opposition to the new ideological direction. This was rejected vehemently by Hargrave. He asserted that the Kibbo Kift had not changed its ideals or values, its members were still required to 'perfect' themselves as an élite instrument and if anything, they had to prepare even harder for the battles ahead. They must realise that only a full understanding and awareness of the Just Price and Social Credit would make the Kibbo Kift's cultural perspective fall into place; it would flood their unified world picture with political and economic clarity. There was to be no turning back: Kinsfolk would have to equip themselves for the new discipline or get out.

Hargrave's response to the various departures was blunt: once released from the privileges and obligations of the Kibbo Kift, one would never be allowed to return. In his correspondence with close colleagues Hargrave gave no indication that the withdrawal of senior members of the Kibbo Kift had affected him. In an uncharacteristic public display of inverted class snobbery, Hargrave sneered at those unable to 'make the grade' as a Kinsman and who had 'faded out'. It was the "better educated" types, "the so-called cultured classes" who were most unreliable.³³ This was a little unfair, as it besmirched the motives of those who genuinely felt out of sympathy and disorientated by the Kibbo Kift's new 'Politico-Economic' position.

Other Kinsfolk, Hargrave 'loyalists', learnt to adapt: 'Lavengri' (Vera Chapman) was an excellent example of a dedicated follower of White Fox. To

her, Hargrave *was* the movement, therefore, whatever Hargrave decreed must be beneficial to the movement. 'Lavengri' had begun exploring Kibbo Kift ideas whilst in South Africa in 1923, receiving Kibbo Kift literature through the post. She began detailing her own exercises, 'rewarding' herself for the completion of objectives and Kibbo Kift-style tests. Some of these had a distinctly African flavour such as the imitation of the crane or the ability to carry a water-bottle on the head over a certain distance. In 1924 she married Mr. C.S. Chapman and returned to England in the spring of 1925. 'Lavengri's' husband signed the Kibbo Kift Covenant in the same year, but although the rather strange Woodcraft name 'Sheepdog' was replaced by the more African inspired 'M'fundis', he felt a distinct coolness towards the Kibbo Kift and Hargrave, to whom his young wife was so devoted. As 'Lavengri's' Log-Book read: "this is my leader and he has my loyalty." ³⁴ Tension intensified due to the fact that Lavengri's husband was also a newly ordained Church of England clergyman.³⁵

Despite the comparative lack of "hilarity" at the 1927 Althing, 'Lavengri' sensed "a new mood" of firm determination within the smaller, yet more "compact" Kibbo Kift. 'Lavengri' accepted that monetary reform was the "one principle" that lay at the heart of the Kibbo Kift. As she put it bluntly: "the world in general couldn't go camping and have fun until that battle was over."³⁶ Nevertheless, 'Lavengri' found the mathematical assimilation of Social Credit a struggle, as did 'Old Mole' (C.W. Paul Jones) another Hargrave insider, who had come into contact with the movement via Rolf-Gardiner and had joined in 1925. However, their confidence in Hargrave ensured their commitment to the new policy. 'Old Mole', the son of a wealthy London G.P., was part of a new wave of more 'politically-minded' entrants, who were responsive to the

‘hardened outlook’ of the movement, rather than the ‘Romantic’ Woodcrafters of the early 1920s. ‘Old Mole’ became a close friend of ‘Angus Og’, better known as Angus MacBean, the celebrity theatrical photographer, who came to London from South Wales, joining the Kibbo Kift in 1926. Their very first experiences of Kibbo Kift life included exposure to Just Price and Social Credit rhetoric, although the arts and crafts side was still their prime motivation for joining. As MacBean later recalled: “Although I couldn’t understand Social Credit and still can’t in its deepest sense, the important thing was to have general sympathy with the problem which Social Credit would remedy. I could see that it made sense on the surface, at least it still does to me.”³⁷

However, there were still long term Kinsfolk to whom the transition was appealing. ‘Gray Squirrel’ (Mrs. G. Gregory) declared that: “being a politically minded person, the change over to Social Credit suited me.”³⁸ According to ‘Wabasso’, who edited an independent Kibbo Kift magazine *The Flail*, which provided a forum for economic debate within the Kibbo Kift, the new direction was a change which “some of the more Romantic and weaker members of the movement found repellent.”³⁹ He felt little sympathy.

With resignations, bitterness and realignments, the Kibbo Kift felt a much needed internal surge of enthusiasm and satisfaction with the publication in 1927 of *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, the effort of which had totally exhausted Hargrave. There had been debate within the movement for a full-length exposition of the ideals and practices of the Kibbo Kift for a considerable length of time and Hargrave had found the book intensely hard going. The book’s purpose was two-fold: to articulate and harden Kin philosophy within the organisation, as well as to broadcast the Kibbo Kift to the wider public. As *The*

Broadsheet in the winter of 1927/1928 stated, the publication marked a “new phase, a place which brings us into the public life of the community. We can no longer regard the Kindred as a more or less private experimental woodcraft group.”⁴⁰

Despite Hargrave’s private and public mood of steely optimism in the face of bitter internal acrimony and departures from both the rank and inner circles, there was one resignation (ironically unrelated to the issue of Social Credit) which shook Hargrave personally: that of Rolf-Gardiner.

Footnotes for Chapter Two, Inside the Lodges

¹ J.Hargrave, *The Nomad*, Vol.1, no.6 (November 1923), YMA/KK 166 (a)

² L. Paul, *The Living Hedge* (London: 1946), p.167

³ ‘News From Tribe And Lodge’, in *The Mark*, Vol.1, no. 7 (Dec. 1922), YMA/KK 165 (a)

⁴ L.Paul, *The Living Hedge*, pp.157-158

⁵ Ibid., pp.164-165

⁶ Ibid., p.155

⁷ ‘Mingan’ (A.C.Garrard), ‘An Outline of Kibbo Kift Training’, in *The Nomad*, Vol.1, no.12 (May 1924), YMA/KK 166 (a)

⁸ A.Offer, *Property and Politics 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.334

⁹ W.Wager, *H.G.Wells and the World State* (Yale University Press: 1961), pp.20- 23

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 178

¹¹ See H.G.Wells, *Men Like Gods* (London: Cassell & Co., 1923)

¹² ‘Blue Swift’, (I.O.Evans) ‘The Lighting of the Council Fire’, in *Wandlelog*, Vol.1, no.2 (Spring 1925)

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- ¹³ J.Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses. Pride and Prejudice Among the Literary Intelligensia, 1880-1939* (London: Faber & Faber, 1992), p.18
- ¹⁴ E.M.Forster, *Howards End* (London: Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1968 edn.), p.111-112; cited in J.Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses*, p.146.
- ¹⁵ J.Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses*, p.61
- ¹⁶ E.M.Forster, *Howards End*, p.109; cited in J.Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses*, p.62
- ¹⁷ Helen Corke, *In Our Infancy: an Autobiography, Part 1, 1882-1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp.127, 160, 179; cited in J.Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses*, p. 146
- ¹⁸ W.Wager, *H.G.Wells, Hitler and The World State*, pp. 18-19
- ¹⁹ Ibid., p. 28
- ²⁰ Malcolm Muggeridge, *Jesus Rediscovered* (London: Fontana, 1969;this edn. 1970), pp. 15,24
- ²¹ W.Wager, *H.G.Wells and the World State*, p. 181-182
- ²² 'Owaissa', 'The Great Spirit', in *The Mark*, Vol.1, no.4 (September 1922), YMA/KK 165 (a)
- ²³ J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home* (London: Constable & Co.,1919), pp.50-51; 'Owaissa', 'The Great Spirit', in *The Mark*, Vol.1, no.4 (September 1922), YMA/KK 165 (a)
- ²⁴ Peter Kemp, *The Culminating Ape* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), p. 196
- ²⁵ J.Hargrave, 'The Head Man's Pow-Wow', in *The Mark*, Vol.1, no.9 (Feb. 1923), YMA/KK 165 (a)
- ²⁶ J.Hargrave, *The Nomad*, Vol.1, no.6 (Nov 1923), YMA/KK 166 (a)
- ²⁷ L.Paul, *The Living Hedge* (London:1946), p.155
- ²⁸ J.Hargrave, 'Penetration or the Point of Direction', in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.1, no. 6 (Dec. 1925), YMA/KK 168 (a)
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ G.Orwell, 'Wells, Hitler and the World State', in *The Penguin Essays of George Orwell* (London: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 198
- ³¹ W.Wager, *H.G.Wells and the World State*, p.127
- ³² Ibid., p.155
- ³³ Ibid., p.135
- ³⁴ Ibid., p. 155
- ³⁵ P.Geddes, 'Review of *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*', in *The Sociological Review*, Vol.1 (1927)
- ³⁶ 'Ken-ea' (Mabel Barker), 'Discovery: Open Spaces', in *The Nomad*, Vol.2, no.4 (September 1924), YMA/KK 166 (a)
- ³⁷ I.O.Evans, *Woodcraft and World Service* (London: Noel Douglass & Co., 1930), p. 127

³⁸ 'Wabasso' (Tom Wycroft), 'The World Survey', in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.1, no.2 (August 1925), YMA/KK 168 (a)

³⁹ J.Hargrave, 'Letter to the Kindred', in *The Nomad*, Vol.2, no.1 (June 1924), YMA/KK 166 (a)

⁴⁰ 'Owaissa', 'Modern Education', in *Wandlelog*, Vol.1, no.3 (Sumer 1925), YMA/KK 171. L.Paul.*The Living Hedge*, pp. 121-123

⁴¹ I.O.Evans, *Heroes of World Service* (London: Murray & Co., 1930), p.50

⁴² I.O.Evans, 'Heroes of World Service: 1. The Martyrs of Mount Everest', in *The Nomad*, Vol.2, no.4 (Septemeber 1924), YMA/KK 166 (a)

⁴³ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* (London: Duckworth, 1927; reprint edn., London: William Maclellan, 1979), pp.26-27

⁴⁴ 'Blue Swift' (I.O.Evans), 'Review of *The Dream* by H.G.Wells', in *The Nomad*, Vol.2, no.4 (September 1924), YMA/KK 166 (a)

Footnotes for Chapter Two, The Flowering of the Kindred

¹ J.Hargrave, 'The Head Man's Pow-Wow', in *The Mark*, Vol.1, no.10 (March 1923), YMA/KK 165 (a)

² Henry Williamson would have agreed on this point: see H.Williamson, *Goodbye West Country* (London: Putnam Books, 1937), p.157

³ S. Graham, *The Gentle Art of Tramping* (London; Robert Holden & Co., 1927), p.80

⁴ J.Hargrave, 'Letter to the Kindred', in *The Nomad*, Vol.1, no.4 (September 1923), YMA/KK 166 (a)

⁵ J.W.Leslie ('Green Flame'), 'Why Esperanto?' in *The Nomad*, Vol.1, no.9 (Feb. 1924), YMA/KK 166 (a)

⁶ I.O.Evans, *Suggestions for Practical Work in World History* (London: Murray & Co., 1929), p.23

⁷ Ibid., pp.12,13,25,31. Admittedly, Evans had left the Kibbo Kift in 1928 and Hargrave was angry about the content of the pamphlet, complaining it gave the press a field day and, indeed, it received a damning review from *Punch* (April 24th 1929.) As a result, Hargrave ordered no further communication between Evans and Kinsfolk.

⁸ 'The Tracker', 'The Kibbo Kift Kindred', in *Youth*, Vol.2, no.13 (Summer 1924)

⁹ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* (London; Duckworth, 1927; reprint edn; London; William Maclellan, 1979), p.100

¹⁰ M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters. The Green Shirts in England* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p.78

¹¹ S.Graham, *The Gentle Art of Tramping*, p.83

¹² Ibid., p.199. Stephen Graham advocated the 'Trespasser's Walk': "There is no absolute right to keep strangers off private property." To pacify landowners and farmers, Graham offered the following advice: avoid damage to crops and hedges, raise your hat to the proprietor and mollify him with "talk of that fellow Ramsey MacDonald and the dreadful doings of Labour; they love that." Ibid; pp.225-232

¹³ See F.Studdert, 'A Plea for Simplicity', in *Camping*, Vol.VII, no.2 (September 1911), pp.14-15; this prompted a lively response from readers fearful of campers receiving the tag of 'Cranks' and 'Faddists'. Mr D'Arcy E. Ferris, in 'A Plea for Simplicity – A Reply', warned that camping should not become a positive mania: "such as the camper becomes an abbreviating lunatic, who almost expects you to boil water in your hat to avoid carrying the necessary utensil;" *Camping*, Vol.VII, no.3 (November 1911), p.27

¹⁴ J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home* (London: Constable & Co., 1919), p.358

¹⁵ J.Hargrave, 'Mind Your Face', in *The Totem Talks* (London: Pearsons, 1918), pp.49-50

¹⁶ 'The Kibbo Kift Pilgrimage to Piltdown', in *The Nomad*, Vol.2, no.4 (September 1924), YMA/KK 166 (a)

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ 'Black Wolf' (F.Hiles), 'Editorial', in *Wandlelog*, Vol.2, no.3 (Summer 1926), YMA/KK 171

¹⁹ 'Hawk' (C.S.Dixon) in an interview claimed that this rush of creativity was only concurrent with his involvement in the Kindred. He never wrote another song or piece of music again: "Hargrave had the ability to bring out latent abilities within people around him. He had the ability to inspire everyone he met." Interview with J.Craven (6-9-95)

Footnotes for Chapter Two, Woodcraft and Social Credit

¹ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* (London: Duckworth, 1927; reprint edn; London: William Maclellan, 1979), p. 11

² J.Finlay, 'John Hargrave, the Green Shirts and Social Credit', in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.5 (1970), p. 58

³ See 'Patteran', in *The Nomad*, Vol.2, no.3 (August 1924), YMA/KK 166 (a)

⁴ J.Hargrave, 'Letters to the Kindred', in *The Nomad*, Vol.2, no.7 (December 1924), YMA/KK 166 (a)

⁵ This is corroborated by the mentioning of a unnamed gentleman with whom Hargrave was working at the time: see, J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, '1978 Epilogue', p. 337

⁶ Brenton was identified by 'Bill' Tacey in a letter dated 23-1-95 as the principle guide for Hargrave in his Social Credit enquiries. For Brenton see *Veil of Finance Studies* (London: Constable, 1920)

⁷ See J. F. Finlay, 'John Hargrave, the Green Shirts and Social Credit, ' in *Journal of Contemporary History* 5 (1) (1970) and *Social Credit, The English Origins* (Montreal: 1972)

⁸ A.Bramwell, *Ecology in the Twentieth Century. A History* (London & New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 108

⁹ J.Webb, *The Occult Establishment* (Illinois: Open Court, 1976), pp.106-107

¹⁰ A.R.Orage, *National Guilds* (London:1914); cited in J.Webb, *The Occult Establishment*, p.108

¹¹ A.Bramwell, *Ecology in the Twentieth Century*, p.83

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- ¹² M.Fordham, *Christianity and the Countryside* (London: Industrial Christian Fellowship, 1938), p.9-10
- ¹³ J.Hargrave, *Social Credit Clearly Explained. 101 Questions Answered* (London: SCP Publishing House, 1945), p.59
- ¹⁴ For information on Kitson, see R.Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right: Fellow Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany 1933-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 61-62; for more information on Leese, see also pp.96-101. Also valuable is Leese's autobiography: *Out of Step: Events in the Two Lives of an Anti-Jewish Camel Doctor* (Guildford: 1951)
- ¹⁵ J.Hargrave, 'The Foundation of a European Policy. An Epistle', in *The Nomad*, Vol.2, no.11 (April 1925), YMA/KK 166 (a); J.Hargrave, in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.2, no.13 (August 1926), YMA/KK 168 (a)
- ¹⁶ J.Hargrave, in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.2, no.23 (June 1927) & Vol.3, no.24 (July 1924), YMA/KK 168 (a)
- ¹⁷ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, pp. 239-244
- ¹⁸ Ibid., p.133
- ¹⁹ 'Editorial', in *The Nomad*, Vol.2, no.3 (Aug.1924), YMA/KK 166 (a)
- ²⁰ J.Hargrave, 'Letters to the Kindred, in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.1, no.3 (September 1925), YMA/KK 168 (a)
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² See *The Broadsheet*, Vol.3, no.30 (Feb. 1928), YMA/KK 168 (a)
- ²³ See *The Broadsheet*, Vol.1, no.5 (November 1925), YMA/KK 168 (a)
- ²⁴ J.Hargrave, 'Political Impotence: A Diagnosis of the Present Situation', in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.1, no.5 (November 1925), YMA/KK 168 (a)
- ²⁵ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, p.245
- ²⁶ I.O.Evans, *Woodcraft and World Service* (London: Noel Douglas, 1930), p.187
- ²⁷ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, pp.113-114
- ²⁸ Ibid.,pp.109-113
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Ibid, p.113
- ³¹ Ibid, p.113
- ³² There was a constant demands for monetary contributions within the Kibbo Kift, as with many small organisations. Other projects which required support were the 'Kin Press' which was moderately successful, and the 'Kin Studio', an 'Arts Centre' and workshop which was based for a short time in a Sloane Square flat but which ultimately failed due to lack of funds.
- ³³ See J.Hargrave, (p.201) in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.3, no.27 (Oct. 1927), YMA/KK 168 (a). White Fox seemed to be in a particular bad mood at the end of completing *The Confession*: "I find a number of Kinsfolk do not understand that they have been admitted to a confraternity

which is fundamentally different from a tennis club. Mandated Kinsfolk who have laid down certain obligations upon themselves, are liable to go off to Timbuctoo or to stay with a aunt in Leamington Spa without so much as a post-card to the Chief Scribe... Some of you do not even read *The Broadsheet* – what you are doing in the K.K. I can't imagine: it will not be long before we have replaced these poor, weak types with better material."

³⁴ Vera Chapman, *The Log-Book of Lavengri* (unpublished manuscript: South Africa, 1923-1926); private archive of Chris Judge Smith, Sussex

³⁵ Interview between Vera Chapman ('Lavengri') and Chris Judge Smith (1990); private archive of Chris Judge Smith, Sussex

³⁶ Interview between Vera Chapman ('Lavengri') and Mark Drakeford; cited in M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters. The Green Shirts in England* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p.96

³⁷ Interview between Angus MacBean ('Angus Og') and Mark Drakeford; cited in M. Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters. The Green Shirts in England* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p.96

³⁸ Letter from Mrs.G.Gregory ('Gray Squirrel') to Mark Drakeford; cited in M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, p.95

³⁹ 'Wabasso' (Tom Wycroft), 'The Obligations of Kinship', in *The Flail*, Vol.1, no.2 (Winter 1926), YMA/KK 167

⁴⁰ J.Hargrave, in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.3, no.29 (Dec./Jan. 1927), YMA/KK 168 (a)

PART B

CHAPTER THREE: THE ECLIPSING OF THE KINDRED

1. 'Rolf the Ranger' and The Kin

If Hargrave was occupying part of the Liberal/Transcendental tradition of pro-ruralism, then Gardiner was an excellent advocate for the Tory-Organic position. As Offer says, they were, in "Paretian terms... 'derivations' of the same 'residue'. Feeding on the same instinctual resources they pursued, in different ways, a similar ideal of social harmony and personal fulfilment."¹ Gardiner and Hargrave followed the same trail for only a short distance: their fundamental beliefs, to which we now turn, were too much at variance to allow for anything more. For Gardiner, the Kibbo Kift was too inorganic and artificial; in the words of D. H. Lawrence: "not quite flesh and blood."²

Hargrave always found it difficult to forgive someone who, in his eyes, had betrayed the spirit of the Kindred or acted against its interests. He took it as an act of personal betrayal. Kindred archives are littered with barbed references to 'quitters' and renegades who, for one reason and another, chose to withdraw their support from the Kibbo Kift, usually to follow their own path. Throughout the 1920s Hargrave's attitude was firm: once one had left 'excommunication' was final. 'Blue Swift', one of the most imaginative and dedicated of Hargrave's lieutenants and considerably experienced due to wider involvement within the British Youth movement, left in 1928 unable to hold to the 'New Policy'. 'Old Mole' was privately commanded by White Fox to ignore any approach 'Blue Swift' might make to him.³ 'Death Watch's' crime was to "treat the Kindred in a rather off hand manner" by failing to report back to either the Chief Scribe or to

the Head Man on his return from Australia: "Most certainly he cannot be welcomed back into the fold as a long lost and beloved son. He, like our friend Rolf Gardiner, either comes to heel in a Kinsmanlike manner, or he is cut off from the Kindred."⁴

This mentioning of Gardiner was a sore point for Hargrave. Gardiner was a Kibbo Kift renegade *par excellence*. His departure, though he took very few with him, left a deep scar on both Hargrave personally and on the morale of the early Kindred, far more so than Leslie Paul's earlier exodus. Gardiner left the Kibbo Kift in the autumn of 1925 and even by the end of the 1920s Kinsfolk were still discussing him and new members asking about him, usually out of earshot of the Head Man. 'Lavengri' described him thus:

Rolf Gardiner was a very gorgeous and magnificent young man. He brought to us something of what the *Wandervögel* were doing and that, at the time, was entirely idealistic. It was peace, better education and the breaking of various taboos; the taboo against discussing sex, the taboo against throwing off your clothes in camp and the taboo against discussing anyone else's religion...well, at the time of Rolf Gardiner we broke the taboos against sex, religion and politics which were absolutely sealed down. We broke the seals and brought them into the daylight.⁵

Rolf Gardiner came to be a Kinsman of the highest order in a very short space of time. He had a suitably exotic background as the son of Sir Alan Henderson Gardiner, the celebrated Egyptologist and spent much of his childhood years abroad in pre-war Berlin, where his father was preparing a German hieroglyphic dictionary at the Kaiser Frederick Museum. Time was also spent with Rolf's Swedo-Finnish relatives on their Baltic estates. Schooling, however, took place in England, firstly at Rugby (which Gardiner detested and insisted that he be withdrawn from) and then at the more educationally 'progressive' Bedales which inculcated within Gardiner an appreciation of the Spartan life. Too young to serve in the war, Gardiner went up to St. John's

College, Cambridge, in 1921. Post-war undergraduate society repelled him with its “false gaiety.... its precocity and cynicism, its adulation of brains and cleverness.”⁶ Gardiner described himself as a ‘radical of the spirit’ and his Romanticism jarred inharmoniously with Cambridge’s climate of fashionable Leftist, scientific humanism and Bloomsbury *chic*. Gardiner travelled extensively in Europe after leaving school and during his time at St. John’s. He found a “new Dark Ages...descending on Europe and the World.”⁷ In 1920 he visited Vienna and then he walked across the Dolomites, still strewn with war debris, as Patrick Wright notes, “pausing to help rebuild a remote war-shattered village, tripping over the skeletons of unburied soldiers in the snow” and when his money ran out, “cutting off the bottom half of his Oxford bags and exchanging the valuable cloth for a meal.”⁸

With his heart full of burning idealism, Gardiner spoke of breaking the “spell of emnity and ignorance” between Germany and Britain, but at Cambridge, “when [he] stammered out [his] inchoate theories of the need to renew the roots of our culture, to revive the religion of the soul through the soil, J. B. Priestley, taking out his pipe, flattened [him] by saying: ‘young man, all ye want is jest a few reforms’.”⁹

In horror Gardiner found refuge and inspiration in alternative political and cultural circles: he became influenced by the Arts and Crafts side of Guild Socialism, as expressed in the pages of *The New Age*, which led to an interest in Social Credit, as has been mentioned. However, Gardiner’s real passions lay in the cultivation of music and dance (especially the Folk dance) but, above all, in D. H. Lawrence. Lawrence became, as Gardiner expressed it:

The torch bearer, the torch leader of my youth. Lawrence went ahead exploring the dark, dispelling the limits of our shabby, exhausted vision of

things, breaking away from the abstractions of finite ideas, worn out concepts, barren words and tired symbols, Everything that came from him was quick and fresh, charged with hope and expectancy, It was this grand newness of life and vision which carried one away, challenging not ones intellect, but one's soul.¹⁰

Lawrence's *Aaron's Rod* and *Twilight in Italy*, which detailed the writer's 'spiritual tramp' across the Alps (thus mirroring Gardiner's own adventures across the rooftop of post-war Europe) particularly excited him. Cambridge's dismissal of Lawrence's self evident 'genius' infuriated Gardiner:

You may laugh, you may sneer, you may snivel, you may say or do any darned thing you like, but I tell you and foretell you, that the words of D. H Lawrence will burn and tingle on the lips of men, in days when the dingy carpings of minds like James Joyce and Marcel Proust, of Lytton Strachey and Sigmund Freud, of Sidney Webb and Maynard Keynes will have long, long been consumed beneath the vanished debris of our potty civilization.¹¹

This last passage formed part of Gardiner's first editorial in 1923 for a University paper *Youth*. Gardiner was determined to modify the journal from an expression of "progressive University thought" to becoming the focus for "young enterprise." As he put it: "the purpose of this journal was to link post-war movements of creative and deconstructive purpose in Europe and England and to relate their activities to whatever new *Weltanschauung* would break down the stale crust of outworn vision and dead dogma."¹²

The journal was particularly excited by the German Youth movement with which Gardiner was to build strong links. Germany was "at the vortex of serried, whirling emotions. The air vibrat[ed] with the consciousness of the tragedy which she [was] experiencing."¹³

Germany and, indeed, Europe's salvation lay in the hands of Youth. Those who had visited post war Germany would have undoubtedly encountered such a male specimen:

A youth of uncertain age and probably undergrown, but of striking appearance, blue eyes, long flaxen hair, the skin clear and sun-scorched, down

tight over the face muscles, the limbs bared, no stockings, shorts, open-necked. You will probably meet him, rucksack on his back, with five or six companions of both sexes one of who will be playing the guitar or other musical instrument. And they will sing as they go, marching the town streets after dusk, or trudging a country road under a parching Saturday or Sunday afternoon sun...¹⁴

This was the figure of the 'resurrected' pre-war German *Wandervögel*, the Romantic youth in revolt against bourgeois convention and a decadent materialist society. German Youth, which had radicalised itself at the famous Höhe Meissner meeting of 1912, now evolved into the *Bünde* as more earnest, more determined movement; more convinced of the failure of not only the German society, but of all modern civilisation. According to Gardiner, the pre-war *Wandervögel* had always been more of a Romantic figure than the British Boy Scout, but now German Youth was more realist and hard-headed. German Youth was now even more fiercely engaged in the continuing inter-generational conflict between sons and fathers:

Crushing the father by positive spiritual superiority. He is nauseated and disgusted with the weakness of the father, the servility which allowed him to suffer the yoke of Prussianism; he is repelled by the thought of his father's body, its moral laxness, its grossness, its indecision, he sees nothing, but evil in beer, smoking, cinemas, civilisation...¹⁵

Their revolution of the soul was leading Youth towards a rejection of old conventional dress, habits and morals. A new form of dress was adopted, reminiscent of the wandering medieval minstrel or scholar; towns and cities were rejected in favour of woods and countryside; a new community was being formed. The modern dance halls and jazz bands were rejected in favour of folk music and "dance forms (from) his own soil".¹⁶ Youth was embracing the spirit of Goethe, Schiller and Nietzsche, as well as Lagarde and Langbehn. Stefan George and Carl Spitteler were their favoured poets, but they could still revel in the mawkish sentimentality of novels such as *Wiltfeber* by Herman Burte, the

stern Puritan ethic of sexual purity and abstinence voiced by Hermann Poperts in *Helmut Haringa* and the celebration of death and 'the Cult of the Fallen' in the stories of Walter Flex such as *The Wanderer Between Two Worlds*, which was described as: "a paeon to nature, the nation and human beauty The sun, wood, and water fused with the joy of youth, purified by national sacrifice."¹⁷

The Youth movement contributed to the growth in alternative political and cultural initiatives in Germany such as the new gymnastic and health clubs, folk, craft and agricultural collectives and the celebrated educational settlements, the *Siedlungen*. Journals such as *Die Neue Rundschau* were reviewed favourably by Gardiner. Herman Hesse, another mouthpiece for German Youth through works such as *Knulp* and *Demian* and his journal *Vivos Voco*, sent a message of support to *Youth's* Christmas edition of December 1923. Gardiner trod in Hesse's footsteps when he asked for each person to return to the purer sources within himself in order to achieve inner harmony and equilibrium: "in these mighty hours of storm and stress, let a man retain the unique quiet oneness of his own being"¹⁸

Germany, caught in the throes of political and economic convulsions, was undergoing a spiritual revival. Youth culture became invariably involved with a whole host of alternative or 'underground' lifestyles and practices which emphasised the importance of individual improvement, development and health. German *Nachtkultur* was a popular subject of the British press, but *Youth* tried to present an enthusiastic yet mature introduction to the subject. Vegetarianism, gymnosophy, homeopathy, Theosophy and the Occult were also burgeoning.¹⁹ Eastern philosophies found a welcome reception alongside Western mysticism in the cultural maelstrom of the young Weimar Republic. Hinduism, Buddhism,

the Tao and I Ching, as well as Rabindranath Tagore, competed with Meister Eckhart, Paracelsus and Rudolf Steiner. Such experimentation was to reach the sombre heights of government. According to Alex de Jonge, the sober and respectable politicians of the Social Democratic Party dabbled in 'free love', 'rational dress' and the benefits of raw food. It was even rumoured that certain Weimar governments were sponsoring would-be alchemists to solve the nation's fiscal problems.²⁰ Hesse's novel, *Journey to the East*, evoked the flavour of another German Utopian, Frederick Muck-Lamberty, who in the immediate aftermath of the Great War, beginning with twenty-five young companions, set out on an extended 'tramp', in carnival atmosphere, into the Thuringian countryside. As they passed through each town and village, residents curious about their outlandish costumes, musical instruments and colourful banners, would come out to watch and engage in conversation. Lamberty's gift of oratory meant the celebratory mood became infectious. People with precious little to be happy about in post-war Germany were attracted to the simple message of simplicity, piety, brotherly love and, most of all, joy. Lamberty's so-called *Neue Schar* quickly gathered hundreds and then thousands of followers over the next few months. However, such a spontaneous eruption of near hysteria could not sustain itself for long: his 'Children's Crusade' fizzled out into oblivion when this modern-day Pied Piper, unlike Gusto Gräser, was found to be taking sexual liberties with his female adherents.²¹

Gardiner, through empathy with Germany's troubles, spread the message that such a calamity was set to engulf the whole of Europe. His rhetoric was one of a coming apocalypse similar to White Fox's voiced in *The Great War Brings It Home*. This was expressed most graphically in October 1923:

Everywhere we have seen a civilisation burnt out, hollow and futile, hollow people, hollow art, hollow ways of life, futile struggles to repair the tumbling house, futile efforts to mend this broken machine, futile efforts to patch up a life which has gone rotten to the core. Don't get excited by these threadbare phrases, love, Brotherhood, Peace, Democracy, Dictatorship of the Proletariat....Run to your window when you set up in the morning and look at the sunlight gleaming with unrivalled brightness in the rooftops and like tongues of fire in the tips of the leaves, breathe the clean air and feel the warm breath of the sun on your naked body and all these worldly messes in which humanity loves to wallow, will fly to the other circumference of reality.... This is the winter of our discontent and the approaching winter of Western Civilisation....There will be wars, revolutions and inexorable decay. Nothing, neither Leagues of Nations, Communism, Pacifism, nor any other *ism* can defeat the laws of life. This is the end, slower maybe in some parts than in others, but inexorably certain. The Caesardom of the great magnates will move from corruption to corruption, the masses from hopeless revolt to hopeless revolt. Meanwhile, we shall, at the same time be enjoying the delights of a mechanical Utopia; the prophecies will be fulfilled.

There are millions of negative people in the world today, Robots: there are a few thousand of positive or semi-positive people. It is for some of these positive people that this paper is written. They will be found in the self-supporting communities, which are springing up here and there, all over Europe today; small groups of men and women who are actually living by the power of some new impulse within, living apart from the poisonous atmosphere of the big town, searching back in themselves towards a deeper contract with life.²²

Gardiner's vision of impending urban and industrial decay stemming from decadence and 'over-civilisation' and his corresponding belief in the need for a more holistic, natural existence, inevitably propelled him towards the orbit of the Kibbo Kift and the 'charismatic' aura of White Fox.²³ There was also an element of the 'Illuminated' character in Gardiner: as a youth he had been particularly influenced by the prophecies of St. Joachim de Flora who believed that the separate Persons of the Trinity had a different resonance for each stage of human history, and thus had predicted the coming 'Age of the Holy Spirit', following the 2,000 years since the Crucifixion.

It was Mary Neal who introduced Rolf Gardiner to Hargrave. They had met through their involvement in folk dancing circles. Neal had been close to Cecil Sharp in the 1900s and had introduced many country-dances, to the

Esperance Working Girls Club. In 1908, Neal and Sharp had formed the Esperance Morris Guild as a forerunner to the English Folk Dance Society, which Neal refused to join, having in the meantime fallen out with Sharp over policy directions.

Gardiner quickly joined the Kibbo Kift although he later claimed this was to be “considerably against my inner feelings.”²⁴ Gardiner was in clear agreement about Hargrave’s criticisms of the Scouts, having disputed with the leader of the Cambridge Rover Scout Troop over the swearing of loyalty to God and King. He was genuinely excited by the new radical structure and practice of the Kin. White Fox’s own analysis was “penetrating and incisive. His vision eclectically fed, was charged with lucid arguments, there was nothing ‘mushy’ or effete about his programme.”²⁵

White Fox, as Gardiner saw him, combined sanity and fantasy. The Kibbo Kift celebrated hardihood, health and physical prowess. They were a ‘Peace’ movement, but ‘Peace’ was expressed in robust, strong, Anglo-Saxon fashion, ‘*Grith*’. They spoke of themselves as an élite, a nucleus for a new mode of living. They spoke of the importance of creativity, imagination, endeavour, spirit and renewal. They were for ‘Action’ and opposed to ‘Sloth’ which was regarded by Hargrave as mankind’s prime enemy. In short, the Kibbo Kift was the nearest English equivalent to the *Wandervögel*. Gardiner expressed his own identification with Kibbo Kift techniques when he wrote: “nearly all Westerners can read, write and reason, but only an increasing minority know how to walk, sit, greet, smile, wear clothes, or lift their hands with that inborn certainty and spontaneity, which is the mark of the natural aristocracy of the body.”²⁶

Gardiner allowed Hargrave plenty of access to the pages of *Youth* in which to proselytise the movement.²⁷ For his part, Gardiner, though not mentioning the Kibbo Kift by name, delivered a powerful boost for Woodcraft in his 1924 essay, '*What Shall We Do To Be Saved?*'. Gardiner called on Youth to heighten their senses, become more intuitive, to celebrate and adapt to the natural rhythm of life and the seasons. Bodies were to be trained through camping, dance and self-sufficiency. In recognition of White Fox's autocratic leadership style, Gardiner (who was in support of Hargrave against the Co-operative faction of the 1924 Althing) recommended the avoidance of debates, theories and discussion, in favour of "leadership with authority".²⁸ In receiving the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry's journal *The Pine Cone*, the Editorial of *Youth* noted its lack of "precision, romantic invention, general vigour and humour," which in contrast characterised Kibbo Kift literature.²⁹

Gardiner's contribution to the Kibbo Kift was to become more valuable. Now known as 'Rolf the Ranger' his foreign contacts were a source of pride to White Fox. Hargrave was already becoming well known in Youth movement circles on the continent: Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence translated a number of Hargrave's early Woodcraft texts into German between 1921 and 1924, with a forward and explanatory notes. French and Czech editions of *Lonecraft* and *The Wigwam Papers* were to follow in 1923 and 1924 respectively. *Pfadfinder* Youth groups in Germany were particularly responsive to Woodcraft books both by Thompson-Seton and Hargrave. According to Walter Laqueur, Stefan George and Hargrave were the "two main formative influences on the *Bünde* in the 1920s," particularly the White Knights Circle of Martin Voelkel.³⁰ White Fox's Tribal Training methods found resonance in a country already captivated by

Karl May's tales of the 'Wild West'. Hargrave's Woodcraft blended easily with the following *Wandervögel* traditions born before 1914: the raised arm salute, the medieval style garb, the importance of music and song, the cult of group loyalty, initiation ceremonies, selective tests and its élitism ("Youth who cannot climb mountains, wear snowshoes or go sailing are not our kind.")³¹ Karl Fischer began the process of formalising the early Youth movement initiatives in the 1900s, by organising a constitution, a newspaper and by advocating the Open Air life at all convenient times. *Wandervögel* were expected to sleep in barns and shelters in the days before the widespread use of the tent. Amateur theatricals, story-telling, feats of strength, gymnastics, puppet shows and log-books were all part of the German experience too, and curiously, Hargrave's letters from the Gallipoli Front to the Boy Scout readership, were mirrored by former *Wandervögel* soldiers sending dispatches back to their young admirers back home. White Fox had always stressed the need for Woodcraft Scouts to have a clubroom or designated meeting area where a Tribe or Lodge could meet in private. In *The Great War Brings It Home*, Hargrave recommended 'Hardihood Clubs' for men aged over twenty years, whose clubhouse, a decorated repository for camping gear, tools, books and ritual equipment, would be the "gathering place for the chosen few."³² This was echoed by the *Wandervögel*'s frequent advocacy of a *Nest* or *Heim*, often a shed adorned with emblems, colours and motifs, housing collective equipment and a small library, thus serving as both an administrative and practical centre for the society, as well as a venue for entertainments in the winter.

Hargrave was fiercely proud of the lifting of the sex taboo by the Kibbo Kift. Even during his time as Scouting Commissioner he never missed an

opportunity to discuss male adolescent sexual health. Curiously, his rather prurient moralising also found a resonance amongst sections of the German Youth movement. Although ‘liberated’ Germany was supposed to be leading Europe in its progressive attitudes towards sexual matters in the 1920s, Hargrave’s stance was similar to that of the late Victorian and Edwardian cult of Grecian culture which elevated the god Pan. Grant Allen, who had called on society to abandon its traditional restrictive Christian virtues of penitence and self-abnegation in favour of the Grecian ideal of self-development, had also proclaimed that “the free Greek was not ashamed of sex, not ashamed of his own body and its component members.”³³ While Hargrave endorsed the cultivation of human beauty and the ‘Splendid Body’, regularly denouncing ‘Body Contempt’, he was careful to avoid any association with Grecian homoeroticism. *The Great War Brings It Home* stated that while nakedness was nothing to be ashamed of (indeed, as few clothes should be worn as possible) ‘incontinence’ was a vice and an “evil” to be combated by abstinence from rich foods and by the avoidance of tight clothing, constipation and “hot, comfortable beds.” Therefore “camping out is a good way of counter-acting a very dangerous temptation.”³⁴ Furthermore, “all those who sit upon Camp Council bathe the organs of reproduction with cold water every morning before starting for the morning run.”³⁵

These were commonplace assertions amongst the majority of Europe’s Youth leaders and educationalists. Even G. Stanley Hall commented that “there is a close bond between this habit and degeneracy.”³⁶ Any suggestion of sexual impropriety was quickly stamped on within the Kibbo Kift and Hargrave, aware of the sensitivities surrounding the co-educational basis of the organisation,

looked down on “holding hands, sprawling about and generally exhibiting feeble sex reactions in public.”³⁷

Hargrave also entertained a morbid fear of venereal diseases. This was seen as an ‘urban scourge.’ “Venereal diseases are diseases of towns and cities and not of the countryside.” This was due to the level of ‘temptations’ which, if unchecked, could lead to a loss of ‘self-control’ amongst men.³⁸ Such views were commonplace and had been for some time, from Le Bon attacking the effects of prostitution on French society, to *Health and Efficiency* in 1919 warning of the spread of V.D. from returning soldiers.³⁹ There was a similar air of Spartanism in Germany. A.S. Neill, working at the ‘*Neue Schule*’ at Hellerau in post-war Germany, commented on the Youth movement’s strict aversion to tobacco and alcohol, hinting at a deep subconscious desire for such luxuries.⁴⁰ Novels like *Helmut Harringa* reacted against the beer-fuelled revelries of the German student fraternities. German Youth sought a return to the chivalric, courtly love of distant adoration. This can be found in Hesse’s *Demian*, whose hero, the schoolboy ‘Emil Sinclair’, manages to sublimate all coarse and vulgar urges pertaining to ‘Frau Jaggelt’, the local stationers shopkeeper (who entertains older boys “behind the counter”) in favour of the unattainable ‘Beatrice’, allowing Emil to raise his “altar with the image of Beatrice and in dedicating [himself] to her, [he] was dedicating [him]self to the Holy Spirit and the gods, sacrificing the portion of [his] life that [he] had drawn from the powers of darkness to the powers of light. [His] goal became purity, not pleasure; happiness was replaced by beauty and spirituality.”⁴¹

The Open-Air freedom of the Youth movement, being in a mixed-group as the Kindred was, semi-clothed or even naked, necessitated its own code of

strict morality to act as a deterrent to any public criticism. German Youth was still smarting from the pre-war disclosures of Hans Blüher, an historian of the *Wandervögel* who was influenced by Freud and had characterised the movement as an erotic phenomenon. What is more, he had seen erotic friendships between boys and youths as essentially creative and positive, infuriating the movement.⁴² What Lacquer says of the German Youth Movement could equally be true of the English Woodcraft Movement; contrary to being a den of licentiousness, the “Youth Movement was designed to sublimate the juvenile libido.”⁴³

The Kibbo Kift made contact with continental groups from a very early stage. The links with Baron van Pallandt and the Dutch scouts has already been discussed. A *Störmvögels* Tribe was established along Kibbo Kift lines at Gröningen. In March 1923 the French *Union Fraternelle du Scoutisme Independent et des Clubs de Jeunesse* federated to the Kibbo Kift by signing its Covenant. They had withdrawn from the official French Scouting organisations to launch a specifically Woodcraft organisation and a Kibbo Kift delegation attended its October conference. In the September 1922 edition of *The Mark*, Hargrave excitedly announced that he had been contacted by a Russian Woodcraft Group in Revolutionary Petrograd, the ‘White Fang Tribe.’ There were also reports of Youth instructors in Southern Russia using Hargrave’s old Scouting essays ‘*At the Sign of The Council Fire*’ and W. Haberoff, the Keeper of the Great Russian Roll and Tally requested the need for more translations.⁴⁴ The Kibbo Kift went on to applaud the creation of official state-run ‘Woodland Schools’ in Soviet Russia as evidence of a “reinvigorated educational system.”⁴⁵ The Czech Woodcraft League, one of the oldest Woodcraft bodies, was founded in 1912 and made official contact in 1923, when its Head Man Milos Seifert,

went camping with White Fox in Hertfordshire. All these contacts were important in boosting the prestige and status of the Kindred. Another sizeable organisation, the Woodcraft League of Poland held its third annual meeting in Warsaw in August 1924, but there is no evidence of any contact with the Kibbo Kift.

A number of Dutch Lodges were established by the mid-1920s (a '*Netherlandsthing*' registered as a regional unit of the Kibbo Kift) and in 1926, Hargrave's novel *Harbottle* was translated into Dutch. Hargrave boasted in the same year, "we can truly claim a European reputation and that reputation is of a very high standing." White Fox was encouraged by the widespread use of Totems, Kin symbolism, the Sign of the Open Hand and the fact that Dutch, Polish and Czech Lodges all called their annual meetings the 'Althing'.⁴⁶ A Belgian Kibbo Kift group, the 'Lawerçe Lodge' surfaced in 1926, headed by 'Mer-en-Aten' who led the camps and conducted talks on Philosophy and Social Credit in a candle-lit Antwerp attic, bedecked with Woodcraft motifs. A Brussels Lodge went on to be founded in 1929.

However, White Fox saw the German Youth Movement as the jewel in the European crown and was therefore keen to reinforce these links: Gardiner was the key. In 1923 Gardiner attended the North European Youth Assembly held at Hellerau near Dresden, along with four other Kinsfolk. The previous year Gardiner had led a troupe on a German tour, in the face of official opposition from Cecil Sharp and the English Folk Dance Society. In 1924 there were further exchanges and visits by members of the German *Bünde*, organised by Gardiner, who spoke of himself as a "barbed wire cutter" between Germany and England. *The Nomad* reported with pride that 'Rolf the Ranger' was staying

the winter in a “secularised monastery” at Rosenau-am-Sartagaberg “driving an ox team”. What was more, he “had spotted the Mark of the Kibbo Kift in Regensberg on a pennon flown by friends of the Kibbo Kift.”⁴⁷

Gardiner’s prolific energies were also being invested closer to home: 1923 had seen the formation of a ‘Travelling Morrice’ under the leadership of Arthur Heffer, a Cambridge publisher and a close friend of Gardiner’s, which undertook a musical tour of the Cotswolds. Camping out, travelling on overladen bicycles, performing on village greens and market squares, “the liberation of [this] unconventional yet disciplined masculine activity was intense.”⁴⁸ The Easter Hike for 1925 saw ‘Rolf the Ranger’ leading a “glorious glee” of Kinsfolk, with Gardiner contributing a number of songs which proved popular with the movement.⁴⁹

Gardiner was appointed Gleemaster for the 1925 Althing. Competing against ‘Sea Otter’ and ‘Kootima’ in the Skaldic contest, ‘Rolf the Ranger’ also organised a series of athletic contests:

I want this fleet foot contest to take place – the Head Man agrees – in order to inaugurate a new tradition of athletics in the Kin. The race will be between tribes, as teams – something like a relay race –and for men and boys only. They will be run *naked*, except for loin cloths or gee-strings and will be conducted ceremonially.⁵⁰

As Drakeford notes, such was Gardiner’s standing at the Althing that there was speculation that he might be appointed Deputy Head Man. As it turned out, he accepted the position of Gleemaster for the coming year.

Although Gardiner was entertaining some serious reservations about the Kibbo Kift and Hargrave in 1923, “By the midsummer of 1925 [he] felt sure enough of [him]self to flout [Hargrave’s] authority and seek [his] own followers.”⁵¹ Some open criticism had been made of the Kin as early as the

summer of 1924 with an essay entitled, '*Harbottle, Germany and Tradition*' in which Gardiner took issue with artificial ideological abstractions and in this case, the Wellsian ideal of World Unity discussed in Hargrave's recently published novel *Harbottle*, "World unity is neither desirable nor possible, it is I believe, against the inherent nature of things... it bears no relation to the real, organic, living world – it is a mere 'geometric abstraction.'" Gardiner came out against the "cotton wool" of abstract ideas and the "onslaught of pacifists and world-unitarians." The influence of D.H. Lawrence was becoming starkly apparent, "the blood will out, you cannot deny the blood, no more deny the spirit; life refuses to be idealised, to be driven along in one direction alone. You cannot deny the past either." After further denying the perfectibility of mankind or world harmony, Gardiner ended with a defiant challenge: "I want no hope of world unity, no kingdom of heaven on earth, no prizes to lure me on. I want the fight and man naked and unashamed, with his sword in his hand and behind, the stars sweeping westward and before, the wind in the grass. It is enough, Brothers. Action! The word is spoken."⁵²

Gardiner also gave a hint of dissatisfaction concerning Kibbo Kift dance. Curiously, Hargrave had never been totally sympathetic to the restoration and cult of the Folk Dance, indeed it had never had a high priority within the movement. In keeping with the 'inverted traditions' of the Kibbo Kift, Hargrave favoured the experimentation with new ritual dance based on primitive forms. Gardiner believed however that dance and music that kept to the steady rhythm of the earth and seasons, held a critical position in the recovery of Western civilisation. Although excited by the developments of choreographers such as Dalcroze, Rudolf Laban, Margaret Morris, and the Eurythmics movement, they

had nevertheless “jilted the tradition of the soil”. It was therefore vital that “the old mystery, the fire and the blood of the Morris must be infused into the dances of the Kibbo Kift; the dances of every new and genuine brotherhood must be inspired with the magic breath of ancient rituals.”⁵³

Gardiner repeated his criticism a year later, accusing the Kin of walking out of step with the “rhythmic order” of the universe, “so far, all the creative work of the Kindred has had its origin in Ideas and Will, but Ideas and Will are things of mental consciousness and are restricted within certain measures. Rhythm is a flowing from within and is bounded by neither time nor space.”⁵⁴

In the winter of 1925, he undertook a tour of North Yorkshire, where he performed the sword dance among the miners of North Skelton. The dance, which represents the killing of the old year, had a profound effect on Gardiner. He wrote in 1926, “the magic was still in my heart like ancient pain. I knew that here in the North of England, in the winter of 1925, the flame of ancient mystery was still unquenched. This is the only way.”⁵⁵

Gardiner’s departure from the Kin came after a short, but terse meeting with the Head Man at Gardiner’s London house in Lansdowne Road. There was a clipped public silence about Gardiner’s exit, but Hargrave did respond to Gardiner’s ‘anti-intellectualism’ in *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*,

And if it is to be Nordic – if it is to bands of Young Flaxen-Haired Giants Morris Dancing in the Sun – what can it possibly signify beyond giving a pleasant harmless outlet for young fellows who can afford the pastime and who find it easier to revolt against the intellect than to set their minds and ‘rhythms’ to any constructive analysis of human needs.⁵⁶

Gardiner’s exit stemmed from the realisation that the discussion of the role of the Folk Dance opened up the core differences between Hargrave and

Gardiner's thinking. Gardiner, always pre-occupied by questions of leadership and authority, could no longer follow the Woodcraft trail.

2.The Springhead Ring or Kin Garth?

Even after his official departure and excommunication from the Kibbo Kift, Gardiner still managed to associate with Kibbo Kift comrades. In October 1926 for example, Gardiner accompanied 'Old Mole' (who bore a message from the Kindred's VII Althing) to a conference of German Youth leaders held near the Kiel Canal. However, he was keen to correspond with his mentor D. H. Lawrence as to his decision to quit the movement. It seems that the Lawrentian tune of Gardiner's critique was directly inspired by the Master himself. On July 4th 1924, Lawrence wrote to Gardiner,

Myself, I am sick of the farce of cosmic unity, or world unison. It may exist in the abstract, but not elsewhere... I have known many things that they may never be unified: Ceylon, the Buddha Temples, the Australian Bush, Mexico and the Teotihuacan, Sicily, London, New York, Paris, Munich – don't talk to me of unison...(There is) no more unison among man than the wild animals...to me chaos doesn't matter so much as abstract, which is mechanical, order. To me, it is life to feel the white ideas and oneness crumbling into a thousand pieces and all sorts of wonder coming through...¹

Lawrence went on to comment directly on Hargrave,

I am glad if White Fox and his Kibbo Kifters have a good time. *Chacun à son goût* – and let him keep it. I have mine, and it is different... a return to the older version of life. But not for the sake of unison. And not done from the will. It needs some welling up of religious sources that have been shut down in us: a great yielding, rather than an act of will: a yielding to the darker, older unknown, and a reconciliation, nothing bossy.²

Gardiner also sought closer links with German Youth to augment his organic vision of the future. He was honoured by the *Frieschar*, the élite German Youth organisation (which was also one of the most successful)

founded in 1926 by Ernest Buske their famous one-armed leader, a man of considerable talent and charm and another close friend of Gardiner's. He met with Carl Becker, formally Secretary of State for Education in Prussia and then, between 1925 to 1930, Prussian *Kulturminister*. Becker was to correspond with Gardiner and visited him in England on a number of occasions before his death in 1933. Through Becker, Gardiner also became friends with George Göetsch a former pre-war *Wandervögel* and war veteran, who had been imprisoned in Siberia for five years and then become a leading figure in the *Bünde* and founder of the famous *Musikheim* at Frankfurt-an-der-Oder, which was conceived in 1927 and dedicated on October 15 1929. As Gardiner put it, "the *Musikheim* was to become the centre, not only for musical recreation and further education; it was to be something in the nature of a regional power-house aiming at the cultural recovery of eastern Germany... a crucible of artistic experiment, a workshop of health and wholeness."³

The *Musikheim*, which attempted to restore the arts to the 'common calendar' of the local community in order to re-vitalise its primal foundations, was seen by Gardiner as being an example of those "islands of spirit" which shone like a beacon in the mid-winter of the "new dark ages" of the twentieth century, just as the Cistercian monasteries, combining work and worship, were an intellectual and spiritual refuge in the Middle Ages.⁴ Gardiner was to take British musical contingents to the centre on numerous occasions in the 1930s. Other experiments in community living which Gardiner applauded included the *Böberhaus* at Lowenberg in Silesia, where Gardiner was also included in work camps, the Danish Folk High School at Krabbesholm in Jutland as well as *De Meihof* school near Arnhem, in Holland. Gardiner was also linked to Adolf

Reichwein, an adviser to Carl Becker, who had an institute at Jena where Zeiss factory apprentices lived and studied.⁵ The last major German influence on Gardiner was Eugen Rosenstock-Hüssey, leader of the élite *Hohenrodter Bund* who had contributed to a collection of essays entitled *Britain and Germany*.⁶ Rosenstock-Hüssey was in fact the inspiration behind the *Böberhaus* at Löwenberg and a major figure in the promotion of adult education and the student work camps movement. In all these centres cultural activity was linked to agricultural work and art was harnessed to the natural rhythm of the seasons. Gardiner had been attracted to the Kibbo Kift's self-styled withdrawal from the masses and its élite training for a noble purpose. He still maintained that "the unfolding of a new order of human society might depend on the contribution of small exemplary bodies rather than on mass movements." This rebuilding of the nation by a new 'aristocracy' was not an escape from modernity but "a subordination... to a larger organic authority; the authority of the Natural Order, which is based on rhythmic laws."⁷ Hargrave agreed; to remove oneself too far from Nature destroys both body and mind. However, in the Kindred's vigorous preparation for the coming Armageddon of social and political collapse, the one vital source was missing from White Fox's vision of Kin Garth: the soil.

Gardiner always enjoyed an intense, almost mystical feeling for the soil and the cultivated land. The peasant was the root of civilisation and resting upon the level of care and attention that this cultivator gave to his husbandry, was the fate of the human race. This was a simple, but unchangeable socio-biological fact. Just as Hargrave was coming to the conclusion that Social Credit was the key to the fulfilment of Woodcraft ideals, Gardiner turned towards a wholehearted commitment to the land. Restoring British agriculture seemed a

far more accessible target than the ill-defined ideas of the 'World Service'. Art, music, comradeship, health and happiness would all flow naturally from productive labour on the land. These German collective endeavours had the smack of real endeavour, purpose and promise and therefore they should be attempted in England. As Lawrence wrote to Gardiner in January 1928:

It's very difficult to do anything with the English: they have so little togetherness...like grains of sand that will only fuse if lightening hits them. They will fool about and be bossed about for a time with a man like Hargrave...but there is nothing in it...The Germans take their shirts off and work in the hay: they are still physical, the English are so woefully disembodied. God knows what to do with them. I sometimes think they are too sophisticatedly civilised to have any future at all.⁸

Although Gardiner's mind was further encouraged in this direction owing to the initiatives of the *Musikheim* and the *Böberhaus*, Lawrence, always interested himself in collective social experiments, had suggested in December 1926 that Gardiner should seek out an inner spiritual health where he could focus his energies, "a centre of silence", "the fissure into the underworld, like the oracle at Delphos, where one can always come to."⁹ This opportunity for Gardiner arose in 1927 when his uncle Balfour Gardiner, granted him part ownership of a recently bought estate at Gore Farm, Ashmore, in Dorset. Gardiner saw the chance of restoring this virtually derelict land into a rural centre. On the surface this appears similar to the ideal of the Kin Garth, but also reflects fundamental differences between the Tory-Organicists and the Liberal-Transcendentalists. Hargrave had no real passion for the living agricultural countryside. His 'celebrations' of country workers were few and far between.¹⁰ The Kin celebrated not the working farm, but the ancient track, the barrow, the standing stone, the woods and open land.

Gardiner's restoration of the estate was to be a three-fold project. Its economic dimension would involve restoring the fertility of the land using as 'natural' methods as possible. Gardiner was to adopt the bio-dynamic methods of Rudolf Steiner, who based his agricultural practice on the premise that the earth is an organism which inhales and exhales in accordance with seasons. The secret of all life and thus good husbandry is to harmonise within these cycles.¹¹ The skills, handicrafts and industries under threat owing to the poor state of British farming in the inter-war period, would have to be revived and re-learned locally. Culturally, the village and family life "had to be fed by forms of recreation and festival..." and finally, the endeavour would be religious in the fundamental use of the word "because behind all husbandry and craftsmanship and using such things as drama and festival, stood sacramental ideas of worship and offering, as opposed to the etiolation of modern life, by the decay of reverence and mystery."¹²

Family, friends and those who had taken part in Gardiner's continental and English activities rallied round. The project moved up several gears in 1933 when the adjacent Springhead Farm with its own millhouse was purchased. In the mid 1930s, the 'Springhead Estate' was to become the focus for European workcamps with contingents of Scandinavian, Dutch and German students spending summers there working for nothing, singing and dancing. In the same way that Baden-Powell and Hargrave disapproved of frivolous, 'time-wasting' activities, so card-playing, smoking and ball-games were frowned upon at Springhead.¹³ With the death of both Lawrence and Buske in 1930 and the resignation of Becker, Gardiner had to develop his own sense of direction and leadership. Even more remarkably, the sword-dancing miners of North Skelton,

as well as unemployed miners from the pit villages of Cleveland (who had taken part in land re-settlement clubs organised by Gardiner in 1932) came down and mixed with miners from Silesia and the Ruhr. Just as the Kindred had carefully plotted their yearly cycle, so Springhead evolved a series of seasonal ceremonies based around the church calendar. Ancient ceremonies were resurrected, such as Plough Monday (the first Monday after Twelfth Night) complete with sword dancers shouting 'Speed the Plough' and Bishop Lovett of Salisbury blessing farm implements in a special service. On Plough Monday 1938, the Minister for Agriculture appeared in order to address dancers, farm-workers, locals and onlookers in the Corn Exchange, Dorchester.¹⁴ Harvest provided Gardiner with another opportunity to explore his love of ceremony and ritual. The last stook of corn would be brought home in a great procession of wagons and carts, "decorated with boughs and garlands, the horses with dahlias in their bridles and the workers of the estate in the wagons, the sixty campers on foot." Harvest supper was held in a barn bedecked with garlands of flowers and corn, accompanied by songs and speeches and the passing of a 'loving cup' in the candlelight, from which the assembled drank.¹⁵

In December the Christmas story was performed as a mime in the Millroom at Springhead, with local farmers eager to play the 'Kings of the Orient'. It was composed of "movement, music, dance and the commenting and sonorous verses of Milton's *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*."¹⁶

The demands of efficient farming and the unfavourable agricultural climate tempered and matured Gardiner's romanticism; that which did not lead to good husbandry simply could not be afforded. Hence these practices built up

a strong, out-looking, vibrant rural centre and not the 'little shrine' that D. H. Lawrence spoke of.

Gardiner still maintained an important place for hiking and camping. From 1926 onwards he helped gather around him the future builders of Springhead by organising a series of winter hikes across the Downlands of Wessex, following in the steps of Alfred the Fyrd Aldhem and Edward the Martyr; covering the ancient sites of Cerne Abbas, Avebury, Abbotsbury, Shaftesbury and Glastonbury. As Hargrave believed, the rediscovery of laws governing the individual and the community was only to be ascertained through the action of ceremony, camping and hiking, not by locking oneself up in a library poring over books. In words which Baden-Powell and Hargrave would have approved of Gardiner declared, "we sought action inspired with creative fantasy."¹⁷ In true Kibbo Kift style, each hike was rigorously organised with the allocation of positions such as cook, logmaster and bursar (or 'Chantyman'.) Torchlit ceremonies and flaming beacons, another Gardiner speciality, owed much to the example of the *Wandervögel*, the *Bünde* and indeed, the Kibbo Kift.

Gardiner believed he had outgrown the Kindred. The publication of *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* allowed him to reflect on White Fox in his ongoing correspondence with D.H. Lawrence. Gardiner agreed with Lawrence however on the overall 'aloofness' and 'coldness' of White Fox. As the latter wrote in January 1928:

I read the Kibbo Kift book with a good deal of interest. Of course it won't work: not quite flesh and blood. The ideas are sound, but flesh and blood won't take 'em, till a great deal of flesh and blood have been destroyed. Of course the birth right credit is sound enough – but to nationalise credit is a good deal harder than to nationalise industries. The man alternates between idealism, pure and simple and a sort of mummery, and then a compromise with practicality. What he wants is all right. I agree with him on the whole, and respect him as a straightforward fighter, but he knows there is no hope, his way

– *en masse*. And therefore, underneath he is full of hate. He's ambitious; and his ambition isn't practical: so he is full of hate underneath.... but for all that, on the whole he is right and I respect him for it. I respect his courage and aloneness. If it weren't for his ambition and his lack of warmth, I'd go and Kibbo Kift along with him. But he'll get no further than holiday camping and mummary. Though even that will have some effect. All luck to him...¹⁸

Two months later Lawrence wrote back to Gardiner complementing him on his work, stating that "leadership is very nearly dead save for Mussolini and you and White Fox and Annie Besant and Gandhi."¹⁹ Gardiner planned for Springhead to become a focus for rural reconstruction, a living example of a local initiative in a depressed agricultural area that could contribute to national resurgence. Sensitive to accusations of 'freakishness' or 'rootless idealism', the very failings that Gardiner believed the Kibbo Kift to be guilty of, he attempted to involve the local community as far as possible in ceremonial events, feasts and festivals.

Gardiner also became a close associate with another farming prophet, Lord Lymington (later the ninth Earl of Portsmouth) who lived on his estate at Farleigh Wallop in neighbouring Hampshire. Lymington was Tory M.P. for Basingstoke between 1929 and 1934, but he resigned over the nation's agricultural policy (or as he saw it, lack of one.) Lymington was a larger than life character who had been raised on the cattle ranches of Wyoming. He had been introduced to the legendary 'Calamity Jane' while a baby, by his American mother and his father, the younger son of the then seventh Earl of Portsmouth. Volunteering as a medical orderly in France in 1916, he worked alongside John Masefield treating French, Moroccan and Senegalese troops, before receiving his commission in the 2nd Life Guards Regiment. In 1933, Lymington took over responsibility for 150 acres on the Farleigh Wallop Estate, for which he had been preparing with a post-graduate degree in agriculture from Oxford. Like

Gardiner however, he spent part of his post-war days wandering across Europe, through France, Germany, Spain and the Balkans, accompanied by an old Balliol friend Reggie Wendell. "With a toothbrush and a razor in [their] pockets and precious little else, but [their] return tickets sewn into [their] clothes."²⁰ Lymington as young landowner became committed to the defence of British farming. The call for a home-based agricultural policy that would make Britain as agriculturally self-sufficient as possible, was based on wartime fears of national starvation as well as the financial cost of a decline in agriculture. However Lymington also linked these arguments to a growing ecological awareness of the global damage done to soils by the *diktat* of the market.

The orthodox view on British agriculture in the national economy which Lymington attacked, ran thus: Britain was essentially an exporting industrial nation above all else, thus the productivity and prosperity of the countryside would have to be dependent on the health of international trade and commerce. Britain was to remain committed to importing foreign raw materials that would become manufactured articles which Britain could then sell back in exchange. To the growing army of critics of Free Market economics, such a strategy made little economic sense in a world of high competition and contracting markets. As Oswald Mosley for one pointed out, the advantages that British exporters had enjoyed in the nineteenth century were now being rapidly expunged. Not only had the rest of Europe and North America caught up with Britain, even the developing Far East was posing a threat.

To those like Lord Lymington who were aware of the ecological damage being wrought by free trade, this policy meant not only the destruction of British agriculture, but ultimately the destruction of the economies of the agriculture

based exporting countries, owing to the exploitation of their soils in order to flood the international markets with cheap food-stuffs. As Lymington put it, free trade meant “the products of exploited labour in exchange for the products of exploited land. Sand comes to the African grasslands so that niggers can buy bicycles.”²¹

Lymington wanted to run his estate as far as possible, on organic lines: The ascendancy of monoculture, artificial fertilisers and mechanised quantitative farming was destroying the vitality of the soil and consequently the food eaten. Although Lymington pioneered the use of catapillar tractors on his fields in 1928, he dispensed with all but the most necessary machinery, famously championing, if a little prosaically, the use of “the wooden plough of our ancestors.”²² Mixed farming meant the denial of the myth of ‘Horn versus Corn’. As Gardiner explained, “the partner of the plough is the hoof and if the hoof is withdrawn and in its place there is only loveless rubber and steel, the plough becomes the enemy instead of the giver of bread.”²³

The very physical and spiritual health of the nation was under threat. Like Gardiner, Lymington attempted to unravel the perceived decline of modern life,

our headlong progress was destroying our minds and bodies in peace as well as in war. The more we received a modern education, the more spiritually illiterate we were becoming. The more we watched, be it sport, cinema and later television, the less we did. The more we heard the less we listened, the more we ate of preserved and processed food, the less we truly digested. The more we learned of how our psyches worked, the less sound our minds became. Mentally and physically we felt that we were living on canned and pre-digested sirloins.²⁴

As Patrick Wright notes, Lymington’s circle knew the value of unpasteurised milk, they favoured runner beans growing on hazel rather than

imported bamboo and they attacked 'devitalised' white bread and tinned foods.²⁵ Their attack on urban industrial society focussed in on the specific 'failings' and inadequacies of everyday life. A return to fundamentals was needed: Lymington like Hargrave maintained that "rare are those who can possess balance of mind or serenity of spirit without a whole and healthy body."²⁶

As with the Woodcrafters, the personal, the immediate and the seemingly trivial, all indicated the crisis of modern life. This was not uncommon outside of these circles as well. From Knut Hamsun to John Betjeman, tinned salmon was a symbol of cultural decay. John Carey has explored the numerous references to tinned foodstuffs to be found in H.G. Wells' novels. Leonard Bast eats tinned fish, thus giving the reader a further clue as to his character. George Orwell claimed that "in the long run," tinned food could be deadlier than the machine-gun, whilst Eric Gill attacked 'Bird's Custard' as a "blasphemy."²⁷ Lymington concluded with a sentiment that Hargrave would readily have agreed with, "we might know some physics of astronomy, but did not notice if the moon waxed or waned and we were losing our wonder at the visage of the stars."²⁸

Both Tory-Organicists and Liberal-Transcendentalists were agreed on the sources of ill health in the modern nation. The battle against infectious diseases was being won, but degenerative illnesses such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes were on the increase. The growing consumer society was leading to national decline. As Lymington wrote, "we are apt to look on the average as normal. We think it quite normal to have 'flu every winter, to have incessant colds, to have false teeth and wear spectacles. Again and again, one hears men,

and especially women, talking with eager enthusiasm and not shame of their pathological symptoms.”²⁹

Reflecting on London streets in the 1930s, Lymington declared that “nearly every advertisement from the hoarding or newspaper shrieks some remedy for health or diet. Even ordinary food can only advertise itself if it lays claim to be a ‘pick-me-up’ or ‘energiser’. So-called ‘health foods’ are a condemnation of our everyday diet for all food should give us health.”³⁰ With a farmer’s eye he also noted the “many acres of good ground between Regent’s Park and Wigmore Street... devoted to the ministers of these richer subjects of colitis, sinusitis, and innumerable neuroses.”³¹

Lymington met Gardiner owing to their shared advocacy of organic methods. As Gardiner stated, “manure is very nearly a fetish at Springhead.”³² They both listened to and applied the advice of Dr. Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, himself a disciple of Rudolf Steiner and by the second half of the 1930s they had gathered around themselves a small, but influential coterie of scientists, farmers, poets and playwrights, all committed to organic principles. This group was given the semblance of formality in July 1941 when Gardiner described it as a ‘Kinship in Husbandry’ while at a meeting in Edmund Blunden’s rooms at Merton College, Oxford. Those who gathered for the weekend house-parties at Farleigh Wallop included Gardiner, Professor R. G. ‘Stapes’ Stapledon the grassland specialist and Director of the first Plant Breeding Centre at Aberystwyth, Sir Albert Howard pioneer of the Indore composting method and the Imperial Economic Botanist in India for 26 years, General Sir Robert McCarrison a former director of Nutritional Research in India who wrote on the relationship between farming, diet and health, the bacteriologist J.E.R. McDonagh, Michael Graham the

fisheries expert, Lord Northbourne another organic farming pioneer and Lady Eve Balfour who established the Haughley experimental farms as a direct riposte to the 'progressive' Rothamstead Wheat Station which was regarded as the flagship of orthodox, mechanised, artificial farming. Drs. Scott Williamson and Innes Pierce, founders of the radical Peckham Health Centre were also associated with Lymington for a time, as were the journalists Lawrence Easterbrook, Philip Mairet and J. J. Powell, the writers Christopher Scaife, Ronald Duncan and H. J. Massingham, as well as the historian Sir Arthur Bryant. Together they celebrated their self-perceived 'amateur status'; for as Lord Northbourne once wrote, "pioneers are nearly always amateurs."³³

Like Hargrave and Gardiner, Lymington couched his ideas in suitably cataclysmic rhetoric. In 1938 he published his most influential book *Famine In England*. (This book put him in touch with many of the aforementioned figures, but it was also to be referred to in William Joyce's infamous 'Lord Haw-Haw' broadcasts from Germany during the Second World War.) In Wellsian tones worthy of 'Blue Swift', he predicted the coming apocalypse stemming from ecological collapse: "After the towns had been looted, a swarm of the starving, diseased and desperate population would spread itself over the surrounding countryside, glad of grass and dead rats to eat, killing and devouring like locusts, any living thing in its path."³⁴

Like Baden-Powell, Lymington was also fond of likening the fate of the British Empire to that of Rome: those inner city children who cannot believe that milk comes from a cow and not a tin can, "had their counterparts in Rome and Nineveh."³⁵

Like Hargrave and Gardiner, Lymington was also interested in the question of leadership and authority. Just as White Fox looked to create a new élite, Gardiner and Lymington agreed that the orthodox Aristocracy had 'failed' the nation to a certain extent and that a new aristocracy born of strength, hardihood and initiative was required. All three were inveterate élitists and suspicious of mass movements. Gardiner however, was suspicious of 'spearhead' groups such as Mosley's British Union of Fascists or indeed the Kibbo Kift. Rather, leaders would rise 'organically', "avoiding spectacular publicity, they will remould the small units of the body politic; like the men of John Buchan's story *Midwinter*, they will exert power in the lanes and hamlets of England; and their authority will be as anonymous as the seasons."³⁶

This new élite would convince and earn the right to lead, not through ideas, argument and debate, but by "substance and example."³⁷ Lymington wrote in a similar vein,

If the majority of our aristocracy has sold its birthright for photography without destiny, comfort without responsibility and meals without repayment; if our squires have been wiped out and if the middle classes have rallied to the money standard; there is, among artisans and working men of England, the good stock left that made England the pivot of Western civilisation.³⁸

Gardiner himself wrote with disdain of absentee and 'sporting' landlords who devoted their attention to the pheasant and fox, rather than the working estate.³⁹ After all, aristocracy meant only the rule of 'quality.' All a new élite needed was character, energy and vision, rather than titles, money, formal education or qualifications.

However Lymington did see a vital co-ordinating role for the landed aristocracy who still took their responsibilities seriously. Landed estates were to become the focus of economic, social, cultural and administrative activity in a

particular locality. The estate would become a 'bottleneck' for the processing and distribution of local produce. Local co-operative efforts under aristocratic patronage would free the farmer from the weight of bureaucratic and administrative burdens and would allow for a greater degree of local democracy, thus protecting the revival of small farms and family holdings. H.J. Massingham, who only met Gardiner through the recommendation of Adrian Bell (the popular author and Suffolk farmer) in 1940, applauded the work of Lymington and Gardiner, especially their attempt to turn their estates into indispensable pivots of rural and regional organisation. He expressed the wish while watching the restoration of Tretower Manor, that it become more than just a "museum piece with a turnstile and notice board" and broaden instead to involve not only the manor house, but the whole way of life and the agricultural community which it was meant to serve.⁴⁰

Lymington's thoughts concerning leadership stemmed partly from his involvement with two quasi secret societies. In 1930 he was approached by a fellow Tory M.P. Michael Beaumont, who invited him to meet William Sanderson the leader of the English Mystery at its headquarters in Lincoln's Inn Fields. This was a clandestine order which Sanderson "a very short physically, myopic Northumbrian," invited Lymington to head.⁴¹ Lymington described it as a "school for leadership...a school for the living values we preached of honesty, service to England and complete dedication. Royalism was at the core of [its] belief."⁴²

Its rather invented ritual and ceremony were more pseudo-Masonic (as opposed to Tribal) as with the Woodcrafters. The Mystery pledged itself to the Crown, a re-constituted 'Aristocracy' and the preservation of tradition, health,

breeding and 'instinct.' It also dedicated itself to the elevation of agricultural and rural values. Interestingly Lymington denied it held any Fascist characteristics: "We had no *Führerprinzip*, no mass rallies, no street parades, no uniforms. We believed in government by sane consent."⁴³ Instead the Mistery organised itself along self-styled 'Kin' lines with the establishment of "a sort of cell system designed ultimately to permeate and set the standard for districts, villages, crafts and trades."⁴⁴ Similar to the Kibbo Kift, voting was frowned upon. Instead, a system of 'direct leadership' by the 'Council of Strength' was preferred.

Sanderson and Lymington separated in 1936 and most of the members sided with the latter, who became 'Marshall' and re-named the organisation 'English Array' with its deliberate evocation of the English archers at Agincourt. The Mistery/Array did manage to exert some influence among small mining communities in Northumbria where Lymington drank, sang and discussed cockfighting with Kin members at the Broomhill Colliery near Morpeth. There were also a large number of supporters and members among the farming communities of East Anglia. Reginald Dorman-Smith the Minister for Agriculture at the start of the Second World War and then the Governor of Burma during the Japanese occupation, was also a member of the group. There was also the 'King Alfred's Muster', the Dorset cell of the Array, led by the Hon. Richard de Grey which included a small collection of farmers and artisans, including Gardiner who amongst other services, supplied the group's wholemeal flour.⁴⁵

Yet at heart, both Lymington and Gardiner saw the future vision of the 'Kinship in Husbandry' as the protection and elevation of the 'Cultivator': the

Peasant and his Farm. No life could be sustained without the cultivation of the soil, so the peasant was seen to occupy a sacred place among men. In contrast, Hargrave and the Kibbo Kift celebrated the Nomad, Hunter-Gatherer and his Wilderness. They took their inspiration from the earlier Paleolithic as opposed to Neolithic stage of Human society, provided within the pages of H.G. Wells' *Outline of History*. In contrast to Gardiner and Lymington's pleas for restoration of the peasantries, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* contained certain arguments as to why British agriculture could (and should) no longer rely on home-produced grain. World trade in wheat would flow naturally if only the financial dislocation created by the speculation of the money markets was curbed; "if the wheat fields of Canada constitute the best wheat growing areas, it is, in reality, ridiculous for each country to be scratching up small patches for the cultivation of inferior wheat."⁴⁶

The hard graft of intensive, mixed farming was going against the swell of history and would have no place in the future Utopian Leisure state that Social Credit and Woodcraft would usher in, "the little man on his Plot of Land is not in line with the flow of human evolution of these islands."⁴⁷ However the Kibbo Kift did not deny the self-evident manifestation of a Back-to-the-Land mood in Britain, even though she would play no part in any 'land re-settlement.' The Kibbo Kift pledged not to let British farming slide completely, with an undertaking to establish an Agricultural Credit Bank and to provide assistance to those wishing to undertake a new life on the soil. 'Blue Swift' had also defended the Kibbo Kift's position arguing that the 'urge' to cultivate was a natural recapitulation of the Neolithic stage and as such, was as healthy and necessary as the Paleolithic 'urge' to 'wander,' 'hunt' or 'hike.' What is more, there was a

new scientific or technological ‘urge’ which corresponded to the modern, industrial age in human society and demanded to be satisfied. Thus man’s nature involved a three-fold complex of instincts. “There is no question of reverting to ‘barbarism.’ We have no reason to suppose that the hunting or cultivating life was better than modern civilisation. All three are imperfect and the aim of all thinking persons must be to go not back, but forward to something better.”⁴⁸

There was nothing ‘unnatural’ about machinery, it was the natural outcome of man’s intelligence and inventiveness, the same as ploughed fields, axes and houses. “As for the unsophisticated, unspoilt child, so much more ‘natural’ than the adult, he is as ready to work a model engine as he is to play Red Indians and much readier than he is to weed in the garden.”⁴⁹

There was a touch of patronising arrogance about the Kibbo Kift’s approach to these Neolithic manifestations of Back-to-the-Land. According to ‘Blue Swift’, most people were able to satisfy these instincts by gardening or rearing a pet. To cultivate a plot of land “[did] not seem to do much to advance humanity” and those who wished to revert to the Age of Cultivation and “spend a life dancing attendance on cabbages” often return disillusioned.⁵⁰ ‘Blue Swift’ did not bother to consider whether this might have been exacerbated by the lack of an overall national strategy and government assistance. He implied that the Paleolithic spirit was more noble and exciting than the Neolithic, citing H.G. Wells: “We are but half-hearted homekeepers. The blood in our veins was brewed on the Steppes, as much as on the Ploughlands.”⁵¹ The romance of the Hunter-Gatherer societies, punctuated by periodic bouts of scarcity, was replaced by the arduous toil, famine, exploitation and war of the Cultivator’s life. However:

Exceptional spirits... are never tamed to the plough; they become nomads, traders, soldiers, sailors, or robbers, according to circumstances. From this class of born hunters, revolting against the settled life, come the conquerors and rulers, who subject their less adventurous brothers to obedience and who maintain their positions by being willing, like the hunter, to accept risks and discomfort shirked by the common man. It is no more coincidence that the traditional aristocratic recreation is hunting.⁵²

As Hesse noted approvingly in *Wandering*, the “Nomad is more primitive than the farmer.”⁵³

Gordon Hargrave, White Fox’s father had also celebrated the anthropological culture of the Wanderer by seeing him as the rebel and the outcast associated with Cain and the Wandering Jew, the Nomadic tribesmen with no fixed Temple, always on the move. Yet, owing to their strong sense of tradition and community and their rigorous organisation they prosper by avoiding the dirt, disease, hatred and criminality of the cities, “the multiplication of temples is the breeding of religious animosity, but under one sky there is unity.”⁵⁴

To Gardiner the Kibbo Kift’s evocation of the Nomad was evidence of their essential ‘suburban’ nature. Ventures like the World Survey had irritated ‘Rolf the Ranger’, they too closely resembled H.G. Wells’ beloved ‘cult of the intellect’ and his petty suburban heroes such as ‘Mr. Lewisham’, who pins up the slogan ‘Knowledge is Power’ in his desperate bid for self-improvement, or ‘Remmington’s’ father in *The New Machiavelli* who keeps a fossilised bone on his mantelpiece to stimulate his scientific interests.⁵⁵ Gardiner was revolted by the contribution of H.G. Wells and the Fabian Society to British post-war culture. Gardiner accurately pointed to the relevant decline in the status of Wells as a political luminary amongst Youth in the 1920’s: “Mr H.G. Wells’

conception of the World State and all similar World Idealism is for many of the younger generation, absolutely hard-boiled, stone-cold, sterile and barren...”⁵⁶

The old men of the late Victorian and Edwardian eras had failed to be dislodged by the War, indeed the “real victors of the period were the Fabians: Shaw, Wells, the Sidney-Webbs, the middle class apostles of the Welfare State, of an egalitarian, hygienic and eugenic, suburban England.”⁵⁷

The Kibbo Kift was essentially a manifestation of this survival. Although it was a rebellion against suburbia, it came from within suburbia. It dispensed with the Bowler Hat, refused to lie down at the ‘Altar of the Great Good God Grind’, rejected the trivia of “suburban greenhouses....local weddings, funerals, bridge, prattle, stocks and shares, nuts and wine and round the town...rose trellis wall paper and the marbled mantelpiece of ‘Alberta Villa’, Victoria Avenue, Surbiton.”⁵⁸ However, Kibbo Kift remained essentially ‘inorganic’. Its value lay in its analysis and ‘prophecy’, but the “sect-theatricality” of the movement was too abstract, too cold, too “un-English.”⁵⁹

Gardiner was well aware of the superiority of the Liberal-Transcendentalist tradition within English culture, that of the superficial love-affair of the suburban English with the countryside. Gardiner took no comfort from the popularity of weekend rural jaunts (increasingly made by motor-car) that looked for diverting byways, ‘beauty spots’ and quaint villages, while remaining blissfully unconcerned for the critical state of inter-war farming apart from vague feelings of nostalgia for the horse when speeding past a tractor. The hiker would often find the rambling, overgrown, more authentically ‘rustic’ hedgerows of the derelict farm, awash with wild flowers and wildlife more romantic and pleasing than the tightly cropped nature of prosperous agriculture.

Unlike William Wordsworth, beauty for Lord Northbourne lay in “the spectacle of a smiling and prosperous countryside. It is more satisfying than the wildest and most romantic scenery or the most perfectly designed and cared for park.”⁶⁰

This urban-led industry in tourism, leisure and ‘heritage’ was being born within the dark days of agricultural depression. The consumers of this new industry were essentially ‘post-urban’ as opposed to ‘anti-urban’. They were not prepared to forsake the benefits of modern, urban industrial society, but sought rural respite and spoke approvingly of peasant values. John Lowerson has recorded many of the facets of this suburban invasion of the countryside from *Batsford* guide books, *Shell Guides* and ‘Dent’s’ *Open Air Library*, as well as writers such as S.P.B. Mais, C.E.M. Joad and H.V. Morton. Even Adrian Bell, another contributor to the Tory-Organic tradition found the popularity of his early novels led to a “distortion” of his later fiction because of his readers’ “expectations of stories about quaint country folk.”⁶¹ A promise of the coming hegemony of the car was indicated with organisations such as ‘Trust Houses Ltd,’ which from the 1920s sought to convert old rural pubs into “tasteful roadhouses.”⁶² Understanding or meaningful dialogue between the indigenous rural population and the suburban day-tripper would have been hard if the average hiker had followed the advice of *The Complete Hiker and Camper* for 1931: “Do not put on superior airs when talking with farm or other country folk. They are far from being ‘simple’. Don’t be annoyed if they show a natural curiosity as to your camping arrangements. There is little else for them to be interested in.”⁶³

Hargrave, now living in a bungalow in the commuter belt of Hertfordshire, was to Gardiner the epitome of this national self-delusion.

Interestingly, the bungalow came to be seen as a hated symbol (similar to tinned salmon) of everything that was wrong with the modern world. It was a poignant emblem of a countryside being subsumed under the rush of twentieth century 'progress'. Its relative cheapness, its affability and unpretension jarred the aesthetic sensibilities of many inter-war period writers and commentators. 'Bungaloid growth' ranked alongside arterial roads, golf courses, electricity pylons and later aerodromes, as further testimony to a disfigured landscape.⁶⁴ It represented the intrusion of a dominant city into the countryside, as opposed to the harmonious blending of town and country which the Garden City theorists planned for. As Lowerson notes, the nightmare dystopia of future worlds in the 1930s was ironically not the 'cities in the sky' of Wells, Le Corbusier and Fritz Lang, but that of the "suburbanised countryside" of ribbon development and "mock-Tudor tea shoppes."⁶⁵ These 'evils' were identified by John Betjeman, who while calling for bombs to fall on Slough, asks that they might:

"Spare the bald young clerk who add
The profits of the stinking cad...
"It's not their fault they do not know
The birdsong from the radio...
"And talk of sports and makes of cars
In various bogus Tudor bars
And daren't look up and see the stars
But belch instead."⁶⁶

Gardiner looked forward with dread to a future strangled by the creeping tentacles of a boring, anonymous, sterile suburbia fed by electricity, petrol, train and metro. As Anthony Ludovici, a fellow Kinsman of Lymington's English Array asked, "is England to become one long ugly succession of streets, full of ugly, toothless people living on tinned food, tea, margarine and white bread?"⁶⁷ That Gardiner regarded the Kibbo Kift as part of this trend, is evident by his curt, dismissive evaluation of the membership of Kin: "These were mostly

clerks, minor civil servants, garage hands and teachers living in the Home Counties.”⁶⁸

To Gardiner one could not have much more unpromising human material to work from. Nothing of any real, lasting, positive value would come from these well-meaning, earnest representatives of the lower middle-classes. As Gardiner said, White Fox was merely the saviour of a ‘suburban’ England.⁶⁹

Footnotes for Rolf the Ranger and the Kin

¹ A.Offer, *Property and Politics 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 337

² Letter from D.H.Lawrence to Rolf Gardiner, (Jan.16th. 1928); cited in H.T.Moore, *The Collected Letters of D.H.Lawrence* (London: Heinemann, 1962), p.1034

³ ‘Stathel-Bod’ Message from J.Hargrave to ‘Old Mole’ (C.W.Paul-Jones), (April 12th. 1930), YMA/KK 109

⁴ Letter from J.Hargrave to ‘Old Mole’ (C.W.Paul-Jones), (Dec.8th. 1928), YMA/KK 109. In fact, Death Watch was returned to the fold. He is mentioned at the 1930 Kin Feast as presenting two silver buckles to the Kindred which were to be known as the ‘Buckles of the Hael and the Fair’, to be worn by the fittest and most beautiful man or woman in the movement.

⁵ Interview between Vera Chapman (‘Lavengri’) and Mark Drakeford; cited in M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters. The Green Shirts in England* (London; Macmillan,1997), pp.67-68

⁶ H..R.Gardiner, ‘D.H.Lawrence and Youth Movements of the ‘Twenties’, in *Wessex: Letters From Springhead*, 4th. Series, no.2 (Springhead: Christmas 1959), p.38

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.39

⁸ P.Wright, *The Village That Died For England. The Strange Story of Tyneham* (London: Cape, 1995), p. 179

⁹ H.R.Gardiner, ‘D.H.Lawrence and Youth Movements of the ‘Twenties’, p.39

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.38

¹¹ H.R.Gardiner, ‘Vox Juventutis’, in *Youth*, Vol.1, no10 (June 1923). Maynard Keynes wrote a congratulatory note to Gardiner from Gordon Square saying: “I think your leader the best thing in ‘The Number’”; cited in H.R.Gardiner, ‘D.H.Lawrence and Youth Movements of the ‘Twenties’, p.40

¹² H.R.Gardiner, ‘D.H.Lawrence and Youth Movements of the ‘Twenties’, p.40

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- ¹³ H.R.Gardiner, 'German Youth Movements', in *Youth*, Vol.1, no.9 (March 1923), pp.202-203
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Erna Behne, 'Why We Wander', in *Youth*, Vol.1, no.10 (June 1923). A *Wandervögel* student Behne explained: "We sought to escape prison like schools. We threw out our shoes that pinched our feet".... Bareheaded, with wiry, sinewy muscles, they walked with a "national rhythm" in order to see Germany "for [them]selves"; "what was the good of Germany on a map to us? What we call the 'home-country' we possessed by wandering...we sat at home with peasant, artisan and town-folk, we listened to them, learnt their songs and dances. They saw their misery..."
- ¹⁶ H.R.Gardiner, 'German Youth Movements', in *Youth*, Vol.1, no.9 (March 1923)
- ¹⁷ G.Mosse, 'Two World Wars and the Myth of the War Experience', in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.21 (1986), p. 500
- ¹⁸ H.R.Gardiner, 'Vox Juventutis', in *Youth*, Vol.1, no.10 (June 1923)
- ¹⁹ H.E.Barlow, 'The Cult of Nakedness', in *Youth*, Vol.1, no.10 (June 1923)
- ²⁰ Alex de Jonge, *The Weimar Chronicle* (London: Paddington Press, 1978), pp.13, 176-178
- ²¹ W.Lacquer, *Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), pp.115-117
- ²² H.R.Gardiner, 'Youth and Europe', in *Youth*, Vol.2, no.11 (October 1923)
- ²³ According to Gardiner, "Hargrave and Oswald Mosley were the only 'charismatic' leaders who postured as saviours of suburbia in post war England..."; cited in H.R.Gardiner, 'D.H.Lawrence and the Youth Movements of the 'Twenties', p.43
- ²⁴ Ibid., p.45
- ²⁵ Ibid., pp.43-44
- ²⁶ H.R.Gardiner, 'Die Neue Rundschau', in *Youth*, Vol.1, no.10 (June 1923), p.241
- ²⁷ See J.Hargrave, 'Youth Movements in England', in *Youth*, Vol.1, no.10 (June 1923); 'Natural Ritual and Ceremony', in *Youth*, Vol.2, no.11 (October 1923); 'Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani', in *Youth*, Vol.2, no.12 (Spring 1924)
- ²⁸ H.R.Gardiner, 'What Shall We do to Be Saved?' in *Youth*, Vol.2, no.12 (Spring 1924)
- ²⁹ See Review of the *Pine Cone*, Vol.1, no.1(July 1923), in *Youth*, Vol.2, no.11 (October 1923)
- ³⁰ W.Laqueur, *Young Germany*, pp.136/7
- ³¹ Erna Behne, 'Why We Wander', pp.28-29
- ³² J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home* (London; Constable & Co., 1919), pp.309-315
- ³³ D.Jarrett, *The Sleep of Reason* (London; Wiedenfeld & Nicholson, 1988), pp.155-156
- ³⁴ J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home*, pp. 281-282; in all this, Hargrave was continuing to follow the advice of Baden-Powell who also advocated cold baths, morning exercises and "strength of will", see R.Baden-Powell, *Scouting For Boys* (London: Horace Cox, 1908), Pt.6, p. 359
- ³⁵ J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home*, pp.281-282

³⁶ G. Stanley Hall, *Educational Problems* Vol.1 (New York: 1911), p.464; cited in R.MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1993), p. 166

³⁷ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* (London: Duckworth, 1927; reprint edn; London: William Maclellan, 1979), p.79

³⁸ J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home*, p. 46; Hargrave was basing his evidence on the findings of the Government's Venereal Commission Report of 1904.

³⁹ 'From the Editor's Chair', in *Health & Efficiency*, Vol. XVII, no.214 (Jan. 1919)

⁴⁰ A.S.Neill, 'Wandervögel & the New Education', in *Youth*, Vol.2, no.11 (October 1923), pp.28-29

⁴¹ H.Hesse, *Demian* (London: Panther, 1969), p.76

⁴² W.Laqueur, *Young Germany*, p.50-1

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 57

⁴⁴ J.Hargrave, 'The Head Man's Pow-Wow', in *The Mark*, Vol.1, no.6 (November 1922), YMA/KK 165 (a)

⁴⁵ 'Four Reasons Why I Am K.K.', in *The Mark*, Vol.1, no.6 (November 1922), YMA/KK 165 (a)

⁴⁶ J.Hargrave, 'Letters to the Kindred', in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.1, no.12 (July 1926), YMA/KK 168 (a)

⁴⁷ 'Patteran', in *The Nomad*, Vol.2, no.7 (December 1924), YMA/KK 166 (a)

⁴⁸ H.R.Gardiner, 'The Travelling Morrice', in *The Springhead Ring New Sheet*, No.55 (Winter Solstice 1961); cited in A. Best, ed., *Water Springing From the Ground: An Anthology of the Writings of Rolf Gardiner* (Springhead: 1972), p. 55

⁴⁹ See 'The Easter Hike' in *The Nomad*, Vol.2, no.12 (May 1925), YMA/KK 166 (a). Perhaps the most famous of Gardiner's musical contributions was 'All Hael':

"All Hael, All Hael,
We wield the lashing flail,
That beats the golden life out of all things stale
We come, we come, we come, the Kibbo Kift,
Children of the Fire and the wide world's drift.
Whoso wrong our fiery throng stuns.
We are the strong ones, we the Kibbo Kift,
We come, we come, the Kibbo Kift
Children of the Fire and the wide world's drift."

For the full composition, see *Wandelog*, Vol. 3, no.1 (Summer 1927?), YMA/KK-171. There was some speculation within the organization, that curiously, Hargrave objected to the 'Germanic' feel of Gardiner's songs, contributing to their final split.

⁵⁰ Letter from 'Rolf the Ranger' (H.R.Gardiner), to 'White Chief' (C.J.Ward), (March 3rd. 1925); cited in M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, p.69

⁵¹ H.R.Gardiner, 'D.H.Lawrence and Youth Movements of the 'Twenties', p.45

⁵² H.R.Gardiner, 'On Harbottle, Geometry and Tradition', in *Youth*, Vol.2, no.13 (Summer 1924)

⁵³ H.R.Gardiner, 'The English Folk-Dance: Some Criticisms', Pt.2, in *Youth*, Vol.2, no.13 (Summer 1924)

⁵⁴ 'Rolf the Ranger' (H.R.Gardiner), in *Wandelog*, Vol.1, no.3 (Summer 1925), YMA/KK 171

⁵⁵ H.R.Gardiner, 'Homage to North Skelton', in *Wessex: Letters From Springhead*, 4th. Series, no.2 (Springhead: Christmas 1959); cited in A.Best, ed., *Water Springing From the Ground*, p.47

⁵⁶ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, p.45

Footnotes for The Springhead Ring or Kin Garth

¹ Letter from D.H.Lawrence to Rolf Gardiner, (July 4th. 1924); cited in H.T.Moore, ed., *The Collected Letters of D.H.Lawrence* (London; Heinemann, 1962), p. 796

² Ibid.

³ H.R.Gardiner, 'George Goetsch and the Musikheim', in *Wessex: Letters From Springhead*, 2nd. Series, no.2; H.R.Gardiner, *North Sea and Baltic: An Autobiographical Record of the Younger Generation 1926-1932* (unpublished manuscript; undated); cited in A.Best, ed., *Water Springing From the Ground*, p.70

⁴ H.R.Gardiner, *North Sea and Baltic*; cited in A.Best, ed., *Water Springing From the Ground*, p.xi

⁵ Cited in Malcolm Chase, 'Rolf Gardiner: an Inter-War, Cross-Cultural Case Study', in *Adult Education Between Cultures* (Leeds Studies in Continuing Education, No.2, 1994), p. 233.

⁶ H.R.Gardiner & H.Rocholl, eds., *Britain and Germany. A Symposium* (London: Williams & Northgate, 1928), p.25. Heinz Rocholl, Gardiner's co-editor, who had attended Kibbo Kift camps in 1924 wrote: " We reject a world reconciliation of youth or a world federation of youth as belonging to an abstract and intellectual Utopia... the World Peace Movement is either wholly outside of reality, or is an instrument in the hands of the victors for the perpetual bolstering up of the ephemeral Treaty of Versailles." (Ibid.)

⁷ H.R.Gardiner, *England Herself: Ventures in Rural Reconstruction* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), p.11

⁸ Letter from D.H.Lawrence to Rolf Gardiner, (Jan. 7th. 1928); cited in H.T.Moore, ed., *The Collected Letters of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 1030

⁹ Letter from D.H.Lawrence to Rolf Gardiner, (Dec. 3rd. 1926); cited in H.T.Moore, ed., *The Collected Letters of D.H.Lawrence*, p.950

¹⁰ J.Hargrave, *They Can't Kill the Sun* (unpublished manuscript; undated), p.2, YMA/KK 214; J.Hargrave, *The Wigwam Papers* (London: Pearsons, 1916), pp.73-90

¹¹ P.Washington, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1993), p.324

¹² H.R.Gardiner, speech to the Radionics Association (November 1965); cited in A.Best, ed., *Water Springing From The Ground*, p.8

¹³ P.Wright, *The Village That Died For England: The Strange Story of Tyneham* (London: Cape, 1995), p.161

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- ¹⁴ For a good description, see A.Best, ed., *Water Springing From the Ground*, pp.148-149
- ¹⁵ Ibid., pp107-108, 151-152
- ¹⁶ Ibid., p.151
- ¹⁷ H.R.Gardiner, *England Herself*, p.11
- ¹⁸ Letter from D.H.Lawrence to Rolf Gardiner, (Jan 16th. 1928); cited in H.T.Moore, ed., *The Collected Letters of D.H.Lawrence*, p.1034
- ¹⁹ Letter from D.H.Lawrence to Rolf Gardiner, (March 4th. 1928); cited in Aldous Huxley, ed., *The Letters of D.H.Lawrence* (London: Heinemann, 1956 edn.), pp.704-705
- ²⁰ Earl of Portsmouth, *A Knot of Roots* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1965), p.37
- ²¹ Viscount Lymington, *Famine in England* (London: Right Book Club, 1938), p.90. See also J.Craven, 'Health, Wholeness, Holiness': *Radical Right and Fascist Attitudes to the British Countryside 1918-1939* (University of Birmingham, M.Phil Thesis, 1993), pp.120-126
- ²² Cited in M.Chase, 'This is No Claptrap: This is Our Heritage', in M.Chase & C.Shaw, eds., *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), p.138
- ²³ H.R.Gardiner, *England Herself*, p.85
- ²⁴ Earl of Portsmouth, *A Knot of Roots*, pp.77-78
- ²⁵ P.Wright, *The Village That Died for England*, p.172
- ²⁶ Viscount Lymington, 'The Policy of Husbandry', in H.J Massingham, ed., *England and the Farmer: A Symposium* (London: Batsford, 1941), p.12
- ²⁷ J.Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses. Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia 1880-1939* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), pp.21-22
- ²⁸ Earl of Portsmouth, *A Knot of Roots*, pp.77-78
- ²⁹ Viscount Lymington, *Famine in England*, p.78
- ³⁰ Viscount Lymington, 'The Policy of Husbandry', p.13
- ³¹ Viscount Lymington, *Famine in England*, p.78
- ³² H.R.Gardiner, *England Herself*, p.81
- ³³ Lord Northbourne, *Look to the Land* (London: Dent, 1940), pp. 166-167
- ³⁴ Viscount Lymington, *Famine in England*, p.78; cited in J.Craven 'Health, Wholeness, Holiness', pp.127-128
- ³⁵ Viscount Lymington, *Alternative to Death: the Relationship Between Soil, Family and Community* (London: Faber and Faber, p.1943), p.12
- ³⁶ H.R.Gardiner, *World Without End* (London: Cobden-Sanderson, 1932), p.38
- ³⁷ Ibid.

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- ³⁸ Viscount Lympington, *Famine in England*, p.118; cited in J.Craven, 'Health, Wholeness, Holiness', p.177
- ³⁹ H.R.Gardiner, 'Rural Reconstruction', in H.J.Massingham, ed., *England and the Farmer*, pp. 95-96
- ⁴⁰ H.J.Massingham, *The Southern Marches* (London: Hale, 1952), pp.96-97; cited in W.J.Keith, *The Rural Tradition* (Brighton: Hassocks, 1975), pp.239-241
- ⁴¹ Earl of Portsmouth, *A Knot of Roots*, p.126
- ⁴² Ibid., p.128
- ⁴³ Ibid., p.129
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., p.128
- ⁴⁵ P.Wright, *The Village That Died For England*, p.176
- ⁴⁶ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* (London: Duckworth, 1927; reprint edn. London: William Maclellan, 1979), p.254
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., p.257
- ⁴⁸ I.O.Evans, *Woodcraft and World Service* (London: Noel Douglas, 1930), pp.108-109
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., p.106
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 107
- ⁵¹ H.G.Wells, *The Outline of History* (London: 1920), p.457; cited in I.O.Evans, *Woodcraft and World Service*, pp.107-108
- ⁵² I.O.Evans, *Woodcraft and World Service*, p.117
- ⁵³ H.Hesse, *Wandering* (1920; this edn. trans. by J.Wright; London: Cape, 1972), p.5
- ⁵⁴ 'The Natural Naturalist' (Gordon Hargrave), 'Two Cities', in *The Nomad*, Vol.1, no.1 (June 1923), YMA/KK 166 (a)
- ⁵⁵ Peter Kemp, *The Culminating Ape* (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1982), p.205. Hargrave's bungalow was littered with anthropological artefacts and curios, as well as the plaster caste of the Piltdown skull.
- ⁵⁶ H.R.Gardiner, *World Without End*, p.13
- ⁵⁷ H.R.Gardiner, 'D.H.Lawrence and Youth Movements of the 'Twenties', in *Wessex: Letters From Springhead*, 4th. Series, no.2 (Christmas 1959), p.43
- ⁵⁸ J.Hargrave, 'Letters to the Kindred', in *The Nomad*, Vol.1, no.5 (October 1923), YMA/KK 166 (a)
- ⁵⁹ H.R.Gardiner, *World Without End*, p.36
- ⁶⁰ Lord Northbourne, *Look to the Land*, pp.182-183
- ⁶¹ J.Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside', in F.Gloversmith, ed., *Class, Culture and Social Change* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1980), p.260

⁶² Ibid., pp. 263-264

⁶³ C.F.Carr, *The Complete Hiker and Camper* (London: 1931), p.119; cited in J.Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside', p.269

⁶⁴ J.Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside', p.264

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp.264-265

⁶⁶ J.Betjeman, 'Slough' (1937), in J.Guest, ed., *The Best of Betjeman* (London: Penguin Books, 1978), p.24 . Left wing attacks on suburbia were also common. Good examples can be found in George Orwell: "Say what you like – call it silly, childish, anything – but doesn't it make you puke sometimes to see what they're doing to England, with their bird-baths and their plaster gnomes and their pixies and tin cans, where the beech woods used to be." G.Orwell, *Coming Up For Air* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1939; 1959 edn.), p.219

⁶⁴ J.Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside', p.264

⁶⁷ A.M.Ludovici, *A Defence of Conservatism* (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1927), p.234; cited in J.Craven, 'Health, Wholeness, Holiness', p.34

⁶⁸ H.R.Gardiner, 'D.H.Lawrence and Youth Movements of the 'Twenties', p.43

⁶⁹ Ibid.

PART B

CHAPTER FOUR: FROM KINSMAN TO GREEN SHIRT

1. The First 'Green Shirts'

In the face of the onset of the Depression, Hargrave looked towards an exclusively political solution to modern economic chaos. Gardiner seemed to Hargrave to be moving away from a confrontation with the immediate forces of history. Hargrave seemed at last to have found a role for the Kibbo Kift as saviours not of suburban England, but of the industrial unemployed. The Kin believed that having fully fashioned itself, it could now head a new and mighty political force of the disinherited.

By the late 1920s Hargrave's energies were being absorbed more and more by Social Credit rather than any Back-to-the-Land initiatives. The two established vehicles for Social Credit propaganda *The New Age* and *The Age of Plenty* were both responsive to the Kibbo Kift's potential and in fact, *The New Age* reviewed *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* enthusiastically in May 1928.¹ *The Age of Plenty* was the journal of the Economic Freedom League established by Arthur Kitson and although it did not enjoy as distinguished a past as *The New Age* (or being as professionally produced) it had nevertheless gathered around itself a corps of activists who triggered Hargrave's political antennae. Even more importantly *The Age of Plenty*, thanks to the impact of John Strachey, was keen to appeal to 'the masses' and especially to that section most directly affected by the crises of financial capitalism, the unemployed. For the time being Hargrave kept his options open about which avenue to pursue.

By 1928 Hargrave was speaking in terms of a new direction for the Kibbo Kift. It could no longer remain a small élite, deliberately and purposefully

tucked away in preparation for the 'Day of Action.' It was now time to open the doors and bring in as many new members as possible to swell the ranks of the Kindred. The Kin was now approaching the end of its 'Formative Period' according to Hargrave. 'Focus', 'Uniformity' and 'Obligation' had been the watchwords up to this stage of the Kibbo Kift's development, but now they must "Expand! Open Up! Take In!" Hargrave noted that "[they] ha[d] stressed the idea of 'obligation' to such an extent that today, it would seem as if one had to be fully fledged Nietzschean Superman before one could be admitted as a Kinsman. This is absurd and defeats our purpose."²

Warm relations continued between the Economic Freedom League and the Kibbo Kift. In March 1928 *The Age of Plenty* spoke of the Kindred as "a very healthy movement and any man worth his salt should be in it." This was followed up with an invitation to Hargrave to be the main speaker at the Economic Freedom League's annual conference at Matlock Modern School, where there were Kibbo Kift Tribes. This was where White Fox in full dress habit and flanked by Kinsmen on both sides, famously made a hall full of delegates rise at his bidding.³ He had now successfully presented himself to the wider Social Credit movement in the same way that *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* brought the Kibbo Kift into the public eye. Both *The Age of Plenty* and *The New Age* were impressed by the Kindred which "[held] something – some throb of life – which the Social Credit movement [would] need, faith in [it]self."⁴ February 1928 saw *The Age of Plenty* offering space for Kibbo Kift news and notes. The flirtation continued, with representatives from both papers invited to the 1928 Althing.

Hargrave then employed retired New Zealand sheep farmer Philip Kenway to sound out the possibility of utilising the kudos and prestige of *The New Age* as the basis for some 'Third Way' option (or 'Third Line' as Hargrave called it) of mass action. This would utilise the latent potential of the unemployed with, it was suggested, the Kibbo Kift operating a disciplined core of 1,000 members commanding the unquestioning allegiance of some 250,000 followers.⁵ Hargrave had already attempted to involve the Kibbo Kift with the political organisations for the unemployed. In October 1928 he had initiated the creation of 'Surplus Labour Groups' in the North East of England in order to create 'intellectual and emotional ligatures' between the Kibbo Kift and the 'New Leisured Class' (that is, the unemployed and the semi-employed.) The first Northern Surplus Labour Group was formed in Gateshead after Hargrave went on a tour of Northumbrian mining areas in the autumn of 1928. In a curious parallel to the work of both Gardiner and the English Mystery/Array in the same region, Hargrave sought a cultural affinity with the miners through the establishment of a 'Kibbo Kift Homing Pigeon Club' (as opposed to Gardiner's gardening clubs and sword-dancing and Lymington's cockfighting.) Discussions within the pages of *The New Age* ended in a rejection of this proposal owing to Major Douglas' traditional distaste for political movements and because of an article by Douglas predicting the 1929 Depression, so, as Finlay notes "by implication, rejecting the need for any plan of action."⁶ Attention then switched to *The Age of Plenty* with more success. A Kibbo Kift 'Front Organisation' known as the 'Economic Party' was established with Kenway as its secretary. In December 1928 it was announced that *The Age of Plenty* was to be the official mouthpiece of the Economic Party and that all Kin were to subscribe forthwith.

The Economic Party had a dual purpose: to slightly slacken the forward drive towards Social Credit within the Kibbo Kift in order to appease disoriented, reluctant members and to engage people who would not ordinarily have been attracted to the Kibbo Kift, but who were primarily interested in monetary reform rather than Woodcraft. A good example of a high-profile supporter of the Economic Party was Compton MacKenzie.

Leading and respected Kinsmen 'Batwing' and 'Blue Swift' had left in 1928 and Hargrave was secretly concerned about further costly resignations among his lieutenants. In the summer of 1929 Hargrave sought to placate those who thought that "[they] had forgotten the lone camp-fire, the circling stars overhead and the trail that leads through the forest." The Head Man reassured the Kin that "to camp out and keep fit, to lend a helping hand, to be able to make and do, to work for the world's peace, remain the simple code of the Kindred." What is more Woodcraft and the Open-Air Life was still compatible with working for Social Credit. In a throwback to the anti committee-room ethos of the early Kibbo Kift, Hargrave airily declared that "a whiff of wood – smoke is worth a dozen arguments. He went on: "A billycan, a blanket and a bivouac – food, warmth, shelter – these are the realisations of all economics and if you wish a man to know and understand the intricate economic problems of our industrial civilisation, take him first to camp and he will take himself to textbooks and figures later on." ⁷

While on a hiking tour of Wiltshire with 'Little Lone Wolf' Hargrave was asked what viewing 'ancient earthworks' and standing stones had to do with economic reforms. He replied that:

Those pre-Roman men of the long barrow and the old, straight track...were not fogged up with silly notions about Money and Work. Perhaps they knew what they wanted – Food, Warmth and Shelter – and got it. We are in need of the stark common sense of our early forefathers. But...why talk about it? Let the hiking woks set out for the High Places.⁸

The Economic Party was short lived and in 1929 *The Broadsheet* sounded a note of frustration: “It is easier to get a Scout or Rover to understand and accept the New Economics, than to get a Social Credit man to see the use of and take up camping, woodcraft and Tribal Training etc. Hence our progress within the New Economic Movement is slow.”⁹

Out of it however, grew the idea of ‘Workers Educational Groups’, the first being established in 1930 in Coventry, under the auspices of George Hickling an unemployed mechanic. Hickling, who was very much influenced by the ‘Christian economics’ of Arthur Penty and Father Demant, corresponded with Hargrave about the possibility of organising a so-called ‘Legion of the Unemployed’. This soon became known as ‘The Legion’ having organised itself into a small, élite group of the so-called ‘Iron Guard’. By 1931 Hargrave convinced Hickling about the importance of uniform and on 31 May, a Mass for ‘The Cause of Social Reform’ was held in Coventry at Reverend Paul Stacey’s church. Reverend Demant, a leading Social Credit figure and Oxford Professor of Modern Theology officiated and around fifty ‘Iron Guards’ paraded in a “makeshift green uniform.” *The Midland Daily Telegraph* nicknamed them ‘The Green Shirts’.¹⁰ Hargrave welcomed this title and vowed to keep it. The Kibbo Kift was soon to receive a new name fitting their new direction. 1929 saw the calling of the first ‘extraordinary Althing’, significantly held in civilian dress, which considered the Kibbo Kift’s ‘Plan of Action’. This made direct reference to the continued relevance of Woodcraft and the ‘New Economics’:

It will not be a waste of time to understand mindfully, the hunting tribe, its barter economy and its background of homeo-pathic and contagious magic, for, in the long run, all politics are closely knit with mindlore and psychology and the New Economics is thwarted not by logic, but by minds and feelings steeped in tribal traditions of the past, hedged about by the idea of scarcity and taboo... and muddled by the lingering of sympathetic magic, as when educated people put down our present economic straits to the appearance of 'sun spots' or the physical destruction of the Great War.¹¹

Despite the diversion of the Head Man's energies concerning his strategies within the Social Credit movement, the Kibbo Kift as a Woodcraft organisation was technically, organisationally and culturally at its peak by the beginning of the 1930s. Hargrave's assurances that Woodcraft still played an important role within the movement were not mere rhetoric. Confidence within the Kibbo Kift was running at an all time high following the Matlock Conference. "The prestige and general reputation of the Kindred was strengthened by attending this conference. A number of new people realised for the first time that a new factor – the Kin – has entered the national life."¹²

Despite the departures of those such as 'Blue Swift' (who could not hold with the more over zealous plans laid out for the Kin in pamphlets such as *Can the Kin Come To Power?* which outlined the strategy of Surplus Labour Groups forming an 'Unarmed Army' controlled by the Kin in the role of an 'Officer Training Corps,') there were compensations. The newer, more ideologically inclined recruits were satisfied with the movement's definite focus provided by Social Credit. For those who stayed, Woodcraft was also being developed to a high degree. The formation of the Economic Party allowed a certain amount of choice amongst the Kinfolk as to where to expend their energies. As Drakeford notes, the tenth anniversary of the Kibbo Kift in 1930 legitimated a revival of Woodcraft and an "orgy of introspection."¹³ By 1930 three annual 'Dexter Fam' Children's Camps had been held and a Kibbo Kift Teachers' Guild established.

An adult Woodcraft Training Camp was organised for August 1929 where a special lecture was given by the Head Man on 'Body Movement in the Performance of Simple, Symbolic and Ritual Acts'. 'Chickadee' also demonstrated the use of axes and sheath knives. The Company of Archers had made archery into a leading Kin sport, new ceremonial robes had been invested, Kin language had been further 'Anglo-Saxonised', Kin Council had been re-organised and a new series of banners and flags had been dedicated, including 'the Banners of the Place' dedicated *inter alia* to Old Sarum and the Long Man of Wilmington. While this might have indicated that the Kibbo Kift was happy to remain cloaked in esoterica and mysterious ritual and despite Hargrave's announcement of the 'operative period', the movement was more open to public scrutiny. In April 1929 one of the most successful of Kin public events was organised: the Kibbo Kift Whitechapel Art Gallery Exhibition. All manner of handicrafts, camp garb and gear, totems and banners were put on display, there was even a set of enamel Kibbo Kift cufflinks made by 'Liberty's' of Regent St. where a small cell of Kinsmen worked. Lady Emily Lutyens, wife of Sir Edwin and a keen advocate of Theosophy (the Lutyens family had acted as a 'surrogate family' to the young Krishnamurti on his arrival from India) opened the event with a speech in which she voiced her hope that she would be able to learn more about the movement.¹⁴ In all, over 42,000 people visited Whitechapel including Baden-Powell himself who was handed a second copy of *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*. (He had already received a copy as a Christmas present from Sir Percy Everett, but admitted to not being able "to make head nor tail of it.")¹⁵ Despite the realisation that the Kibbo Kift needed a mass membership, Hargrave still displayed characteristic hostility towards ex-members. Even with the

bonhomie of the event, Hargrave responded to two former Kinsfolk who had visited Whitechapel and expressed a wish to come back, by thundering through the pages of *The Broadsheet*: “O-U-T spells Out!”¹⁶

September 1929 saw a successful ‘Fallmote’ of the Northern Kinsfolk held at Harewood Park, Leeds, which attracted visitors from Toc.H., the Cyclists Touring Club, the Workers Educational Association, as well as the Economic Party. ‘Sea Otter’ was busy collecting and cataloguing folk customs and local traditions, ‘Fellwender’ was lecturing to the Theosophists on ‘*What is Kibbo Kift?*’ and a group of five Kinsfolk joined the annual Vegetarian Rambling Club. ‘Woodcraft Training Camps’ and the Lodge of the Seven Degrees’ ‘Scalp-Hunter’ camps were becoming better attended. Night-hikes were more efficient and popular, as can be seen with the foundation of an all-male ‘Night Hikers Lodge’ in Leeds. Relationships with other Woodcraft groups were also thawing. The Order of Woodcraft Chivalry’s Winter Rally in Bristol in 1928 was attended by ‘Blue Falcon’ and ‘Gray Squirrel’ and in return, Aubrey Westlake and an Order of Woodcraft Chivalry delegation attended the IX Althing, where they discussed the possibility of closer links between the two groups with White Fox. Furthermore, three Kibbo Kift members attended Woodcraft Folk’s Grand Council in 1929 and that winter, the ‘Swithra Boh Challenge Camp’ took place between Kibbo Kift and Woodcraft Folk Lodges. This was a physical strength and campcraft contest involving a thirteen-mile ‘speed hike’ with full packs. At the Kin Feast for that year the silver ‘Buckles of the Hael and the Fair,’ crafted by ‘Death Watch’ were awarded to those considered to be the finest specimens of Kibbo Kift physicality, in this case ‘Will Scarlet’ of Aescdalthing and ‘Oenone’ of Kinderthing.

This ‘beauty contest’ within the Kibbo Kift raises another interesting and controversial aspect of Kibbo Kift culture, namely the contrasting roles of men and women within the organisation. Hargrave had to battle hard within the movement to assert his view as to the position of women in the Kibbo Kift. The Kibbo Kift was blessed by the attentions of a number of ex-Suffragettes in the early years. Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence (a former Treasurer of the Women’s Social and Political Union and jailed three times for her activities) had also encouraged the fellow Suffragette Mary Neal in the establishment of the Esperance Working Girls Club. They were impressed by the pacifist and international stance of the Kindred and by its co-educational method. Yet although Hargrave was happy to receive the help and patronage of these women with their useful contacts and could count on the fierce loyalty of a whole host of female adherents, his personal view of the role allotted to women was remarkably traditional.¹⁷

Hargrave was candid enough in his pre-Kibbo Kift texts to state that he was unqualified to offer detailed advice on health and ‘hygiene,’ but said that girls should play an equally active role in and make an equally valuable contribution to, the Kibbo Kift. However like Baden-Powell, Hargrave preferred to speak essentially to boys and men. ‘Mingan’ did offer some more advice in 1924 to women hoping to enter Kin Lodges, stating that women must not be ignorant of the ‘facts of life’ and hoped that women would carry on supporting the pioneering work of Marie Stopes and Havelock Ellis in the battle against “sexual ignorance.”¹⁸ Early discussions about the potential of ‘Roof Trees’ had immediately relegated women to the role of wife and mother. In *The Great War Brings It Home*, White Fox exhorted the mothers of Britain “who are to build up

the men of the land” to emulate Red Indian women and think calm and peaceful thoughts whilst pregnant. They were encouraged to think of King Arthur, Robin Hood, “moonlight”, “twilight”, “fairies”, “buccaneers and Redskins,” as well as World Service heroes such as Scott and Oates.¹⁹ The official, mature Kibbo Kift position was outlined in *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*. Regarding the Suffrage campaign, it stated that “the Kibbo Kift has nothing to say since it regards the vote as practically useless to either sex.” Although Hargrave acknowledged the contribution made by former members of the Women’s Movement, he warned that those who sought some extension of women’s ‘political agitation’ within the Kindred would be frustrated. The Kibbo Kift stood for a restoration of the natural “polarity of the sexes,” that vital, healthy, sexual contrast between the male and female. ‘Mingan’ had instructed women to be free, natural and unconventional, but not “mannish.”²⁰ Whilst denying that this implied an endorsement of the male being the ‘dominant sex,’ Hargrave proclaimed that “the Kindred is strongly hetero-sexual and dislikes any blurring of the edges of male and female qualities. It has no place whatever for the masculine type of woman or the effeminate type of man.” Thus women were to be well dressed, attractive and graceful, with both giggling and ‘strident’ voices being avoided. In order to settle the question Hargrave laid down the law: “No matter what the logical arguments may be, nor how skilfully they are presented, the Kindred decrees by instinct alone, that the popular idea of sex equality is a form of body contempt and belongs to a dysgenic phase of democratic enfeeblement.”²¹

Privately, White Fox wrote that with this attack on feminism he was willing to appeal to the younger generation of the Kibbo Kift members who

were not so 'trapped' by the suffrage tradition. He wanted young men and women to react to one another "without this semi-political mass of ideas."²² However, White Fox did face some criticism from those who believed that the Kibbo Kift should have a more 'progressive' outlook. Homosexuality was not as much of a concern within the Kindred as it had been say, with some pre-war German *Wandervögel* groups owing to the Kin's co-educational nature and its stress on family groups, as opposed to all male camaraderie. However, 'Racoon' (Mary Billingham) another ex-Suffragette, criticised *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* which she saw as "a sin against the Mother-Father spirit," claiming that "homo or hetero love is one." She felt that Hargrave should be receptive to "Uranianism" and to encourage a greater display of 'love' within the Kibbo Kift.²³ It is likely that Hargrave was indeed trying to avoid some of the mistakes of the German Youth Movement, but he was adamant that same-sex relationships were absolutely 'taboo.'²⁴ Personally he had little sympathy for homosexuality and while he conceded that there were parts of Edward Carpenter's *Towards Democracy* which he admired, he felt that Carpenter's works were on the whole "slimy and soft." In contrast to the 'noble' Grecian ideal, homosexuality in fact led to "nervous, high-voiced men, who sob on each other's shoulders." Ultimately it would lead to "deterioration and racial suicide."²⁵ 'Racoon' sought to air her differences with White Fox publicly and intended to campaign for having a woman on Kin Council to represent 'female interests.' She had sought an ally in the shape of 'Lavengri', by now a highly respected Kinswoman, but unfortunately for 'Racoon' White Fox was able to count on 'Lavengri's' loyalty. He embarked on a series of letters with her in order to reinforce the Kin's position: "You know I don't want and have never

suggested – women to be weak and feeble in any way. That is what they are now, because they are half men and are afraid of their feminine qualities. If women are feeble men, they can never be strong.”²⁶

There was no formal forbidding of women to sit on the Kin Council, but White Fox had always felt that men should ‘naturally’ take up these seats. Women who took up ‘male’ positions blurred their sexuality, in effect making them ‘a-sexual’ and leading to their psychological impotence and devitalisation. Although they were on good terms, ‘Lavengri’ felt that ‘Racoon’ would be better off within the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry about which she privately expressed the opinion that it was an organisation run by “spinsters of both sexes.... the ponderous and insipid, who may cultivate beautiful thoughts, but who would never work a revolution.”²⁷

Following a meeting with White Fox and ‘Minobi’ in July 1925, ‘Lavengri’ had discussed the possible establishment of a Lodge of Lone Wigwams, intended to be a support network for isolated Kinswomen and those interested in ‘womanly’ arts. Later two ‘independent’ Kibbo Kift women’s magazines were founded: *The Hearth Fire* and *The Distaff*. These ventures indicated White Fox’s unease not only about feminism, but also about women insufficiently versed in Kibbo Kift philosophy potentially undermining their menfolk. In a special supplement, *The Broadsheet* warned in November 1927: “At no time may the young women attempt to hold a Kinsman away from Kin duties; she should know that any man who will neglect his obligations as a Kinsman in order to pay court to her when it is his obvious duty to leave her and attend to the work in hand, is worthless and will not make a good husband.”²⁸

The pressurised commitment of Kin membership was putting strain on young marriages, which ironically the Kin were so anxious to foster. A Kincouncil Mote in the summer of 1928 discussed the issue. In a letter to 'Lavengri', White Fox admitted bafflement at the development which threatened the whole 'Roof Tree' enterprise: "Marriage within the Kin too often means the loss of two Kinsfolk."²⁹ A strategy to combat this tendency was never fully or successfully implemented. It reinforced his conviction that the new direction of the Kin playing a more active, interventionist rather than gradualist role, was needed.

In many ways the Kin's relationship with women bore a strange resemblance to the later British Union of Fascists' attitude to its womens' sections. There, Mosley had unsurprisingly offered similar views on the polarity of the sexes wanting "men to be men and women to be women."³⁰ Fascist language was also to be couched in traditional masculine rhetoric. (Mosley's famous slogan 'The Old Gangs', referring to inter-war politicians was sometimes changed to 'The Old Women' and Britain herself was described as being 'Hag-ridden').³¹ Yet women were also attracted to the ranks of the British Union of Fascists in large numbers, including many ex-Suffragettes. Like the Kibbo Kift, the British Union of Fascists displayed a sufficient ambiguity in its ideals and practices to entice both progressive and conservative elements. The British Union of Fascists promised to elevate motherhood into a highly honoured position in society, giving it national political representation in the Corporate State with professional women in work, as well as skilled and semi-skilled women being rewarded with greater job access and equal pay. Former Suffragettes like Mary Richardson (who joined the B.U.F. in 1933) saw no

contradiction between her pre-war political past, her involvement with the Labour Party and her association with Mosley. Only the B.U.F.'s 'New Order' could restore women to their rightful place in society.³² It seems that there was a similar attraction for authoritarian leadership, as well as for masculine and 'progressive' ideals within the women of the Kibbo Kift.

2. The Triumph of Social Credit

The 'Woodcraft Renaissance' within the Kibbo Kift could not last however. Hargrave's attentions returned to the Kin following the failure of the Economic Party initiative. The Kibbo Kift was now to be placed in the vanguard of the Social Credit movement. The Kindred was still too small though to be considered 'operative.' Though a closely guarded secret, membership was still below the 1,000 mark. In response to questions posed by Head Man at Althing X, *The Broadsheet* gave plenty of space to searching criticisms and introspective analysis of the Kin in an attempt to find an answer to the reason for the lack of Kin membership growth. Comment tended to focus on the 'voluntary' position of 'splendid isolation' which the Kin had enjoyed in the early and mid 1920s, but which it was now trying to shed. According to correspondents, Kin still projected an image of superiority, élitism and aloofness. Its costume and ritual proved to be a perplexing and confusing disadvantage. Others suggested that the Kin had so many different aspects that it "was not easy to accept them all, from camping to economics." Others laid the blame with the general public, they were too unwilling to accept leadership and discipline and were afraid of 'examining themselves' and committing to

‘politico-economic action.’ Also, that camping and hiking “were too much like hard work for most people.” On the question of how effective the movement’s propaganda was felt to be, most agreed that it was “on the right lines,” but that there was not enough of it and that more direct personal contact between the Kibbo Kift and the public was needed to put across the Kibbo Kift message successfully. Various suggestions were made to remedy the situation from preparing ‘special leaflets’ to be sent to targeted groups, like the Scouts, Rovers, Rambling Clubs, Socialists and “the business man who is not doing well,” to the ‘opening up’ of strict ‘Wok-formations’ of hikes and occasional rambles in order to entice along friends and interested parties.¹ The key activity, as the Head Man emphasised time and time again though, was for every Kinsfolk to ensure that they bring in at least one individual for the year in order to double the size of the movement.

Althing XI passed in unremarkable Kibbo Kift style in June 1930. The main discussion of the gathering concerned the revised, shorter and more simplified version of ‘Kinlaw.’ The development of Woodcraft continued with ‘Fleetfoot’ (sprinting) and ‘Thewstrang’ (wrestling) contests being held. The Company of Archers delivered an impressive display and in the evening while ‘Konu’ sweated over the roasting of a whole sheep, entertainment included a performance of the Haka led by a guest Rover Scout group and a Maori song led by ‘Death Watch’.

A new booklet simply called *Kibbo Kift*, written by Hargrave in 1930, gave a comprehensive and approachable account of the Kindred and its work. It was seen as an accessible companion text to *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*. Unlike the latter, however *Kibbo Kift* began with a trenchant economic analysis

and explanation of the 'Scientific Price' as the basis of Kin philosophy. There was to be no more confusion as to the position of the movement.

Althing XII in June 1931 reported that the results of the recruitment drive were still poor. "Though there was now a much larger fringe of those interested, those contacted were slow to undertake the obligations of Kinship." The word "crisis" was used. Unless the Kin could make a substantial leap in members "[they] would find themselves in an organisational backwater having little significance and no possible reason for existence."² The Head Man then used the full weight of his personality. He ordered all those assembled to get to their feet and instructed that every adult Kinsman should recruit at least one new member by the end of the year. If they did not, he "would seriously consider the disbandment of the movement."³ The tension was eased a little in the afternoon by a discussion on new standardised Totem designs.

Then the axe fell. In July, following decisions reached at the Althing a completely new scheme of 'National Organisation' was delivered under 'Decree 14'; a radical over-hauling of the Kindred was launched. The Althing would from now on be known as 'Kibbo Kift National Assembly.' The 'Stathhelpens' became 'Staff Departments' with a General Treasurer, a General Secretary and a Director of Training. Lodges were to be disbanded and re-organised into 'Threats' of eleven men (with a 'Threat Leader') and 'Hundreds' (ten Threats with a 'Hundred Chief.') 'Middlethings' simply became 'Area Commands.' Personal, Lodge and Thing Totems were to be hung down and units were to receive a Kibbo Kift standard, picturing a symbol of their district and an embodiment of the British Lion. Personal surcoats were to be put aside. Words and expressions such as 'Mote', 'Gear' 'Tom-Tom', 'Bok-Hord' (library,)

'Swink' (exercise,) '*Grith*', '*Wes hael*' and '*Beo hit swa*' were to be changed or banned. Further changes ensued: a new habit was designed, with a green tunic (similar to the Legion of the Unemployed) with a cap to replace the hood, white stockings and a black and white belt. All Kinsmen were to endeavour to obtain this as quickly as possible. Kin Councillors and Hundred and Threat Leaders tended now to drop their Woodcraft names, although some continued to use them in private.

Behind the scenes Hargrave was anxious to instruct his loyal lieutenants how to explain to the Kinsfolk what parts of the old Kibbo Kift form had been swept away and what had been kept intact of its "certain vital characteristics."⁴ The 'forces of disintegration' had to be minimised as far as possible. Publicly Hargrave boldly stated that "we have not recanted, we have not apostasised... we have built up our position bit by bit, but it has not been shifted...our position is the same - Build a Better World."⁵

Hargrave had always been adamant that the Kindred should drop anything that hindered its progress, there could never be room for sentimentality. Although "today we believe that woodcraft and camping are necessary in counteracting the ill-effects of industrialism... our methods are now different."⁶ The 'Operative Period' demanded a new format for the Kibbo Kift, which would have to assume the mantle of a more sophisticated anti-parliamentary grouping. The sole purpose and direction of the organisation would now be Social Credit. Kinsmen had to be ever more tightly disciplined, they would have to learn the art of public speaking so as to deliver lectures (and pose the 'Awkward Question' at public meetings.) Camps were still held, but for training exercises in drilling, marching and propaganda techniques only.

For some individual members 'Decree 14' proved to be the end of a great adventure. 'Angus Og' who had been appointed Kin Photographer and had amassed a definitive pictorial record of the movement, could go no further along 'the trail': "And then this happened which killed the whole thing stone dead for me. We became the Green Shirts, a political movement. And for me, the fun went out of it."⁷

The original Green Shirts of Coventry's Legion of the Unemployed were numerically weak and by now, were closely associating themselves with the larger Kibbo Kift. September 1931 saw the publication of a letter of fraternal greetings from the Legion which expressed the belief that they and the Kibbo Kift shared the same spirit, aims and objectives and that: "the Iron Squads of the Legion and the Threats of the Kindred will enter the engagement shoulder to shoulder."⁸ At the Kibbo Kift's 1932 General Assembly (Althing XIII,) there were forty Legion 'Green Shirts' from Coventry in attendance when a resolution of 'corporate associateship' was passed, meaning that now the Legion was one and the same with the Kibbo Kift. The Assembly noticed how "the Green Shirts were immediately recognised and accepted as members of One Great Kindred, with one objective and one method." What is more, "there [was] a place for everyone in the Kibbo Kift, either as a full Kinsman, or as an Associate Member."⁹

Optimism was heightened by the publication of a new journal *Front Line* and by the use of the old Kin Garth Fund to establish a National Headquarters building based at the Old Jewry Bankside, which was opened on 16th July 1932. The new self-appointed vanguard of the militant Social Credit movement had based itself audaciously adjacent to the heart of the financial beast, the Bank of

England.¹⁰ A solitary portrait of Hereward the Wake was to hang behind Hargrave's chair in his office. In his speech at the opening ceremony, Hargrave welcomed 'The Green Shirts' as the public's nickname for the Kibbo Kift, although it was not until January 1933 that the movement became officially known as 'The Green Shirt Movement for Social Credit'. On January 25th Hargrave received one of his greatest propaganda triumphs, an official endorsement of the Green Shirts by Major Douglas, who invited the movement to adopt Douglas green tartan for the facings on its uniform. The uniform by this stage had undergone further modifications in order to ease the passage of new recruits. Kit now consisted of a dark green shirt, a black leather belt, a dark green beret and grey flannel trousers. In the first instance, only the shirt was necessary, thus minimising the financial impact of signing up.

At the 1933 Kin Feast (now known as the 'Annual Dinner') Hargrave spoke of his belief that the movement was now 'on its way', membership was at last growing apace and the message was being delivered in successful propaganda that was finally reaching its target audience. The dramatic changes in uniform, terminology and structure were now paying off. The hall was bedecked with new Green Shirt flags, emblazoned with the new 'Double-Key' symbol (composed of two 'K's back-to-back) which replaced the old Kibbo Kift Egyptian 'Ka' motif, although there were still some old Kibbo Kift banners on display. Other vestiges were still apparent with a 'Gleemaster' in attendance for the post-dinner entertainment, 'Lavengri' also delivered a new poem 'The Valley of the Dry Bones' and Death Watch's two 'Silver Buckles' were re-awarded. The Head Man could feel with good reason that he had played his masterstroke with considerable success. The old liturgy and rites of the mystical

Kibbo Kift was being replaced by the new political rituals of the 1930's street paramilitaries. Military discipline now replaced ceremonial discipline.

A 'Decree on Public Demonstrations' had authorised all Kinsfolk and Associates to involve themselves in any demonstration in which Social Credit propaganda might prove fertile and in October 1932, a detachment of Green Shirts accompanied Hunger Marchers bearing a large banner inscribed with the legend 'Abolish the Means Test and Issue the National Dividend,' on their way to Trafalgar Square. Comment and acclaim was given to their 'smart', 'business like' bearing and precise marching. In the same month Hargrave had embarked on an extensive tour of Tyneside addressing over eight public meetings in seven days. This success led to calls to distribute free green shirts to anyone who would wear them. Hargrave wrote privately to 'Old Mole' (one of the many Kinsman now forming the 'backbone' cadre of the Green Shirts) that the organisation should go full throttle to create a 'snowball' effect:

With flags flying and drums beating, we must carry people off their feet – sweep them along. The Green Shirts must be a living stream of poetry...we will have a Great Rally and a Parade of 1000 London Green Shirts! Then you will see how all these years of our germinating has been leading up to this growth – this awakening that shall be the spiritual and cultural awakening of the British people.¹¹

Hargrave was well aware that the new recruits were coming into the movement innocent of the old Kibbo Kift traditions and culture. Social Credit was the sole reason for their involvement, not Social Credit as part of some wider initiative. Hargrave needed the discipline and loyalty of all the old Kinsmen to act as a nucleus around which the expected mass of Green Shirts would form and grow. 'Will Scarlet' who joined the movement in 1928 and had earned his name owing to his proficiency with the bow, was now Section Leader 'Bill' Tacey of the 1st Battersea Hundred which opened its own headquarters on

Battersea High Street in April 1933. 'Fleetfoot', who had also joined the Kibbo Kift around the same time, had readily absorbed his Social Credit alongside his Woodcraft after joining. "I thought the Kibbo Kift was going to do exactly what Hargrave said it was going to do." He was more than prepared for the new direction when it came; "I was a Kinsman. I had the Kin uniform on. I put it away and swapped it directly for the Green Shirt."¹² 'Fleetfoot' returned to being known simply as Ashley Lewis, organising Green Shirts in Bethnal Green and Shoreditch, while becoming an accomplished street agitator:

I was the first person to go to the Labour exchange and come back with one hundred recruits for Social Credit. I spoke to two hundred people. Just got up on platform which had been organised by the National Union of the Unemployed. I was absolutely voiceless afterwards, but from there onwards I never spoke at less than one meeting a week.¹³

Lewis discovered that many of his recruits were unemployed Irishmen and there was difficulty in maintaining long term commitment after the initial rush of enthusiasm. Polly Bush, an original Tribe child member of the Kibbo Kift whose family lived near to the Hargraves at King's Langley, was not comfortable with the changing 'feel' of the movement, although she did remain a Green Shirt. She objected to the talk of 'Unarmed Military Technique' and the fact that "a lot of the old ones took on new personalities with the new clothing." She also complained that "a lot of the new Green Shirts – how can I put it – came for the ride because they had nothing else to do, being unemployed and because they would get a sausage and things for a meal at midday if they came to clean out the Headquarters."¹⁴ Such hints of disdain expressed amongst some of the veteran Kinsfolk concerning the quality and type of some of the people joining them, was perhaps inevitable in an organisation trained to think of itself in elite terms.

Hargrave had to answer to those who found leaving the Woodcraft culture behind them and moving into the Green Shirt phase a personal struggle. Whilst maintaining it was only natural to be “a little sorrowful” about the dispensing of “cherished archaisms and accepted ideology,” Hargrave instructed loyalists such as ‘Lavengri’ to channel her energies into the new form. Elsewhere he told her that turning back was impossible. “It is no use playing around with Scouts, Guides and Cubs.... I would rather get no support at all than go on turning round and round inside these squirrels cages.”¹⁵ Hargrave also gave assurances that much of the colour, glamour and excitement of the movement would remain with Green Shirt standards, flags and marching uniformed columns. A ‘Corps. of Drums’ of between fifty to a hundred drummers was also organised and coached to a high standard by an ex-Army N.C.O. Hargrave himself was a former drill sergeant in the Royal Army Medical Corps and the National Leader now gave full voice as a ‘barracks’ square’ martinet. Hargrave told ‘Old Mole’ (now Threat Leader with the 1st London Hundred) that “the cultural expression and feeling” of the Kibbo Kift had to be maintained. He also instructed that new banner designs for Green Shirt sections should combine both ancient symbolism and a modern representation of the locality. (It was suggested that the banner for Gateshead for example, could depict a goat’s head or a ship on the sea and a miner’s lamp.) Hargrave believed that much political capital lay within the ability to tap into regional and local feeling for ‘place’. ¹⁶

Hargrave was adamant that the Social Credit message should be kept as accessible and as simple as possible. There was to be no more blending with mysticism or “semi-religious slush.” Thus: “No Green Shirt is permitted to

distribute any Social Credit literature that mixes Social Credit with anything else. We are determined to keep the common sense of Social Credit ‘neat.’”¹⁷ Hargrave instructed ‘Lavengri’ that her ode to the 1932 Kin Feast had to be clear and political, “we will have a number of new Green Shirts – unemployed or on the dole –and we must not fog their minds or confuse their feelings.”¹⁸

To Miss V. A. Gregory, another original member (formerly known as ‘Gray Squirrel’) who had read about White Fox and the Woodcraft Roll in *The Trail* and *The Scout*, Hargrave made the extraordinary private assurance, that all former Kin regalia would not only be kept, but when the movement began to pick up momentum, that “[he] should go as far as to ‘bring back’ a good deal of the old form.” The Green Shirts, once they were strong and confident enough could re-introduce some of the “fantastic stuff” of the Kibbo Kift. Just as with the Freemasons “no one is put off by the aprons and the ‘jewels’ because everyone knows that the Masonic Order is very powerful in numbers.”¹⁹

Hargrave promised however that there was to be one continuing outlet for Woodcraft within the Green Shirts and it harked back to one of the original motives of the Kibbo Kift, that of the healthy, natural, ‘recapitulatory’ upbringing of children. By the turn of the decade, Hargrave admitted that work amongst many of the Tribes had fallen away. Some individual Green Shirts believed they could combine their Social Credit duties with running small children’s Tribes such as ‘Blue Falcon’ and her Cherry Tree Clan. However, many of the original schools covenanted to the Kibbo Kift had moved on. Hargrave originally mooted the idea that the transformation to the overtly masculine ‘para-military’ style Green Shirts would leave womenfolk to devote their energies to Tribal Training. This was quickly dropped owing to the need

for numbers and the apparent willingness and enthusiasm of many women to form their own Green Shirt sections. It was also proposed that the Company of Archers be reformed into a Youth Section, which would provide a 'school for leadership' among sixteen to eighteen year-olds.

In 1935, Hargrave authorised the mandated Scriptor of the Kinlog (now referred to as the Great Log of the Green Shirts) 'Blue Falcon' to begin altering the style of entries according to the new direction. Prose was to be less archaic and more standard language was to be used. The calligraphy was to be more 'modern,' less entwined and detailed; while representations of Green Shirts were to be symbolic, two-dimensional figures, drawn with bold lines and colours and straight cut faces, lacking features. They were to represent the massed ranks of anonymous Green Shirts to the industrial age more appropriately than the mystical élite of the Kibbo Kift.²⁰ Green Shirt bodies were presented as square set with strong, stark definition in 'poster style.' Hargrave saw the Log, in the declining absence of Woodcraft, as providing a key link between the two phases. It was to be regularly presented at the Green Shirts National Headquarters upon which occasion Milnes was permitted to wear her old Scriptor's Surcoat, in order to imbue new Green Shirts with the 'spirit' of the Kindred.

The ultimate abandonment of Woodcraft though can be illustrated by a letter received in 1937 from a boy living in Ealing, calling himself 'Grey Wolf.' "Several times I heard of a mysterious set of Woodcraft fanatics called the Kibbo Kift and I tried to find out about them, but no-one seemed to know any more than the name." Although he was a Boy Scout, he complained that his patrol had little time for "Red Indian and Woodcraft business." Hargrave

admitted that he did still occasionally receive correspondence from boys recently animated by having discovered *Lonecraft* or other 'Tribal texts' for themselves. He casually wondered if they might be able to rope these youngsters into a "Young Health of Britain Boys" or "something of that sort... it seems a pity not to attract by means of Woodcraft and camping when there are youngsters waiting for it and eager to take it up. It should not be difficult to lead from that to Social Credit and the political fight later on."²¹

Hargrave's actual written response to the boy in question, indicated the final passing on of the Romanticism, idealism and fantasy of the original Kibbo Kift. The picturesque 'farrago' was over. The Open-Air Boy had evolved into the Social Credit street fighter. In the letter Hargrave explained that "most of the old hand members" had grown up into adulthood and though some of them might privately go camping, their energies were absorbed into "the political fight for a Sane Economic System..." Hargrave suggested that he write to the General Secretary to see if there was anyone in the Ealing area who could give him some campcraft ideas; "I don't hold out much hope of this, but it might be worth trying."²²

Meanwhile, Gusto Gräser was back on the road. His wife had left him in Munich in 1919 when he suggested that they, with their children should now live in a cattle shed. A spell of life in a *Junge Volksgemeinde* (a Youth Folk Community) making handicrafts in the 1920s led to further wandering. Interestingly, the 1929 World Depression saw a return to the cult of vagabondage, tramping and 'hoboing', especially in Germany and the United States with the jobless moving out onto the open road in search of work. There was even a 'Vagabond's Conference' organised in Stuttgart by *Die Bruderschaft*

der Vagabunden in May 1929. Having always been subject to police harassment, the arrival of the Nazis saw Gräser 'going to earth' in friends' attics, sheds and houseboats. Vagabonds had no place in the New Age of street armies, police uniforms and the totalitarian state.²³

For Hargrave, tucked away amongst the clattering din of Bankside, marshalling and inspecting Green Shirt columns in tenement court-yards while their polished boots resounded on the wet cobbles, spending time organising paper-sales on grey Saturday mornings, leading street demonstrations and 'interventions' at political opponents' late-night meetings, passing the hours in dingy, smoke-filled halls where the smell of stale beer clings to one's clothes, it seemed that the Buffalo had finally left Kensington Gardens and that the Sioux had struck their tents and departed.

Footnotes for The First Green Shirts

¹ *The New Age*, (May 3rd. 1928), YMA/KK 191

² J.Hargrave in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.3, no.31 (March 1928), YMA/KK 168 (a)

³ See *The Age of Plenty*, (March 1928), YMA/KK 189; J.Finlay, 'John Hargrave, the Green Shirts and Social Credit', in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.5, (1970), p. 61

⁴ *The New Age*, (May 3rd. 1928), YMA/KK 191

⁵ J.Finlay, 'John Hargrave, the Green Shirts and Social Credit', p. 62

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ J.Hargrave in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.3, no.43 (June 1929), YMA/KK 168 (a)

⁸ J.Hargrave in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.3, no.44 (July and August 1929), YMA/KK 168 (a)

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters. The Green Shirts in England* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p.111

¹¹ *Plan of Action of the Kindred in the British Isles*, (document: 1929), YMA/KK 72

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- ¹² *Northfolk News-Sheet*, (April 1928), YMA/KK 174
- ¹³ M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, p.110
- ¹⁴ J.Hargrave, *The Broadsheet*, Vol.3, no.42 (May 1929), YMA/KK 168 (a)
- ¹⁵ Letter from Sir Robert Baden-Powell to Sir Percy Everett, (Dec.25th. 1927), PWE 8/34 Scout Association Archive; cited in M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, p. 99
- ¹⁶ J.Hargrave, in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.3, no.43 (June 1929), YMA/KK (a)
- ¹⁷ For either the Kibbo Kift or Suffragettes, see M. Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, pp. 52-3; for Hargrave on women, see *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, pp. 80-86
- ¹⁸ 'Mingan' (A.C.Garrard), 'An Outline of K.K. Training: the Woman', in *The Nomad*, Vol.1, no.11 (April 1924), YMA/KK 166 (a)
- ¹⁹ J.Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home* (London: Constable & Co., 1919), p.128
- ²⁰ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* (London: Duckworth, 1927; reprint edn; London: William Maclellan, 1979), pp.80-86; 'Mingan' (A.C.Garrard), 'An Outline of K.K. Training: the Woman', in *The Nomad*, Vol.1, no.11 (April 1924), YMA/KK 166 (a)
- ²¹ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, p.86
- ²² Letter from J.Hargrave to 'Lavengri' (Vera Chapman), (May 17th. 1928), YMA/KK 126 (b)
- ²³ Interview between Vera Chapman ('Lavengri') and Chris Judge Smith (1990); Chapman is citing a letter in her possession that she received from 'Racoon'; private archive of Chris Judge Smith, Sussex
- ²⁴ Angus MacBean's homosexuality never became an issue within the K.K. His 'Roof-Tree' marriage to 'Sycamore' quickly fell apart but Kinsmen close to him, such as 'Hawk' (C.S.Dixon) and 'Will Scarlet' ('Bill' Tacey) remained unaware as to his sexuality. During an interview between Dixon and J.Craven, (6-9-95) the former constantly stressed that there was "never a hint of any 'funny business' within the Kindred." Hargrave and the *Wandervögel's* sensitivity remains. An article by Frances Wheen entitled 'The Green Shirts' in *The Independent Magazine* (October 5th. 1991) which featured a photograph by MacBean, of a naked Kinsman, on top of a mountain, making the sign of a 'K' with his outspread arms, re-awoke old fears amongst surviving Kinsfolk.
- ²⁵ Letter from J.Hargrave to 'Lavengri' (Vera Chapman), (June 1st. 1927), YMA/KK 126 (B)
- ²⁶ Letter from J.Hargrave to 'Lavengri' (Vera Chapman), (November 10th. 1927), YMA/KK 126 (B)
- ²⁷ Interview between Vera Chapman ('Lavengri') and Chris Judge Smith, (1990); private archive of Chris Judge Smith, Sussex
- ²⁸ *The Broadsheet*, Vol.3, no.28 (November 1927), YMA/KK 168 (a)
- ²⁹ Letter from J.Hargrave to 'Lavengri' (Vera Chapman), (undated; 1928?), YMA/KK 126 (B)
- ³⁰ Oswald Mosley, *The Greater Britain* (London: BUF, 1932), p. 41
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36

³² K.Killen, 'Women and British Fascism', in *Modern History Review* (July-Aug, 1993), pp.21-23; see also M.Durham, 'Women and the British Union of Fascists, 1932-1940', in *Immigrants and Minorities*, Vol.8

Footnotes for The Triumph of Social Credit

¹ 'Answers to Althing Questions', in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.3, no.44 (July-August 1929), YMA/KK 168 (a) A 'Wok' was an acronym for 'Wedge of Kinsmen' which involved Kinsfolk proceeding in a strict 'arrowhead' formation, composed of seven or ten individuals.

² 'Althing XII', in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.5, no.63 (June 1931), YMA/KK 168 (a)

³ Ibid.

⁴ Letter from J.Hargrave to 'Old Mole' (C.W.Paul-Jones), (February 22nd.1932), YMA/KK 109

⁵ J.Hargrave, 'Now for 1932!', in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.5, no.70 (January 1932), YMA/KK 168 (a)

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Interview between Angus MacBean ('Angus Og') and Mark Drakeford; cited in M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters. The Green Shirts in England* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p.112

⁸ 'Welcome to the "Green Shirts"', in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.5, no.68 (November 1931), YMA/KK 168 (a)

⁹ 'National Assembly, 1932', in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.6, no.75 (June 1932)

¹⁰ The Green Shirt Headquarters were to move to Little Britain, E.C.1, also in the City, in 1934.

¹¹ Letter from J.Hargrave to 'Old Mole' (C.W.Paul-Jones), (Dec.9th. 1932), YMA/KK 109

¹² Interview between Ashley Lewis and Mark Drakeford; cited in M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, pp. 98, 112

¹³ Ibid., p. 119

¹⁴ Interview between Polly Bush and Mark Drakeford; cited in M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, p. 149

¹⁵ Letter from J.Hargrave to 'Lavengri' (Vera Chapman), (July 6th. 1931), YMA/KK 126 (B)

¹⁶ Letter from J.Hargrave to 'Old Mole' (C.W.Paul-Jones), (December 17th 1932), YMA/KK 109

¹⁷ Letter from J.Hargrave to 'Lavengri' (Vera Chapman), (July 21st 1934), YMA/KK 126 (B)

¹⁸ Letter from J.Hargrave to 'Lavengri' (Vera Chapman), (December 20th 1932), YMA/KK 126 (B)

¹⁹ Letter from J.Hargrave to 'Gray Squirrel' (Mrs.G.Gregory), (February 18th 1932), YMA/KK 217

²⁰ Letter from J.Hargrave to 'Blue Falcon' (Kathleen Milnes), (Oct.27th.1934), YMA/KK 94 (B)

²¹ See Letter from 'Grey Wolf' to J.Hargrave, (May 5th. 1937); also Letter from J.Hargrave to the Green Shirt General Secretary (Frank Griffiths) (May 21st. 1937), YMA/KK 43

²² Letter from J.Hargrave to 'Grey Wolf', (May 21st. 1937), YMA/KK 43

²³ M.Green, *Mountain of Truth: the Counter Culture Begins, Ascona, 1900-1920* (Hanover & London: University Press of New England, 1986), pp. 68-76

CONCLUSION

The Green Shirts finally released from the so-called ‘squirrel cage’ of Woodcraft were blossoming by the mid-1930s. By 1934 some 3,426 open-air meetings and thirty two demonstrations had been held as well as the publication of 56,000 editions of *Front Line* and *Attack* (the new Green Shirt Journal issued in May 1933.)¹ The Party was welcomed in from the wilderness by the *Daily Mail* in its *Year-Book* for 1935. That year also saw the movement formally change its name to ‘the Social Credit Party of Great Britain (the Green Shirts)’. The name change indicated certain sensitivity to criticisms from Douglasite Social Creditors as to the ‘direct leadership’ style of Hargrave, but it also reflected mixed emotions over the election of the world’s first Social Credit Government in Alberta. It was widely rumoured that the victory in Alberta of William Aberhart, a radio evangelist had been staged as a devious ploy by the hidden hand of finance to besmirch Douglas’ name and ideas, in that Aberhart’s suspected lack of true understanding regarding Social Credit would tarnish and discredit it. To prevent any similar strategy happening in Britain, Hargrave decided to give his party a more official and respectable sounding name.

Also in the wake of Alberta however, parliamentary activity was seriously being considered for the purposes of propaganda. The constituency of South Leeds was deemed suitable and an able candidate Wilfred Townend was chosen as the so-called Social Credit “wasp.”² With national resources pooled into the local area (and the Corps. of Drums arriving in the Green Shirt lorry, accompanied by the London Green Shirt Flying Squad) expectations were high. ‘Celebrity endorsements’ were received from Sybil Thorndike, Frederick Soddy,

the Marquis of Tavistock (himself a keen Social Creditor) and Vincent Vickers (a former Director at the Bank of England.) The poet Ezra Pound also donated a decorated banner. A message of support from the Provincial Treasurer of the Albertan Social Credit government (who happened to be an emigrant from Leeds) was also published. In the election, a respectable 3,642 votes were polled for Townend, some 11% of the votes cast not an insignificant polling for a fringe party.³

The Green Shirts anticipated further successes in 1936, but a series of setbacks were to fatally wound the movement. First, Major Douglas withdrew his support from the Green Shirts. Relations had been worsening for some time between Douglas' Social Credit Secretariat and the Green Shirts, particularly over the handling of the Leeds election. Matters really came to a head though over Alberta. Douglas refused to be drawn over lending his weight to the Canadian initiative, but Hargrave despite having reservations about the abilities of Aberhart, felt it was an opportunity not to be missed. Secret talks began and Hargrave left for Canada from the Liverpool docks in November 1936. He had commissioned a special 'winter style' paramilitary uniform for the trip, with a white tunic (remarkably similar to Josef Stalin's) replacing his Green Shirt outfit.

Hargrave travelled to Calgary where he was granted the title of 'Economic Advisor' to the Albertan government. Hargrave still believed that Social Credit would be workable and a plan was drawn up within three weeks. This was apparently rejected by the entire Aberhart Cabinet. Rank and file Government supporters whom the *Calgary Herald* described as being 'impressed' by Hargrave, expressed surprise and dismay when he rapidly left

Canada, privately expressing fears that his life was under threat.⁴ Hargrave's being away provided a huge propaganda coup, overshadowing Major Douglas. Hargrave however was furious when he discovered that Douglas had also been in touch with Alberta in the winter of 1936/7 in order as Hargrave saw it, to jeopardise his mission. This led to an unpleasant disturbance the following year when G. F. Powell, an emissary of Douglas returned from Canada in the wake of Hargrave's visit in order to deliver his report on Alberta to a formal gathering of the Secretariat. In the words of Green Shirt Wilfred Price, having had a "bellyful of the Secretariat", they decided to "bust this meeting up."⁵ During the ensuing meleé over thirty police officers were called. Hargrave himself took part, leaping onto a table in full Green Shirt uniform and denouncing the Douglasites before being spirited away. The significance of this act was compounded by the fact that Hargrave was contravening the Public Order Act of 1937, which banned the wearing of uniforms for political purposes. This legislation was passed ostensibly to help defuse political violence associated with the Blackshirts of the B.U.F., which had been escalating in the mid-1930s. Owing to this legislation therefore, the Green Shirts inadvertently lost one of their chief propaganda weapons, their distinctive attire. The Green Shirts had been well aware of the imperative need to protect their uniforms and lobbied hard to ensure a differentiation between the 'menace' of a Blackshirt and that of a Green Shirt, which *Attack* proclaimed as the "poor people's poster".⁶ Following the passing of the act, two prosecutions were brought against Green Shirts who sought to challenge the law with the wearing of badges, arm-bands, ties and other regalia alongside the regular drums and banners. Hargrave warned that the Green Shirts' work was seriously under threat if the colour and élan of the

movement was diluted in any way. In July 1937, Hargrave called for “a forest of flags” and “drums (that) must roll and crash” from “Green Shirts in mufti”.⁷ He was well aware that public sympathy towards the Green Shirts was turning into apathy. Sales of *Attack* plummeted in the Spring of 1937, leading to suspension of publication. Isolated propaganda ‘stunts’ came to be seen as a way of replenishing the dissipated energy of the movement. The Woodcraft watchword ‘Be Picturesque’ flavoured the style of these antics. The slogan ‘HANDS OFF ALBERTA!’ was painted in vivid green all over the walls of the Bank of England. A green brick was thrown through the window of the Bank of Montreal, while other green bricks were sent through the windows of Nos. 10 and 11 Downing Street. An effigy of Montagu Norman, the Governor of the Bank of England with a placard round its neck saying ‘Conscript the Bankers First’, was paraded around the City of London. This led to fighting in Throgmorton Street between Green Shirts, Bank of England clerks and Stock Exchange dealers. A similar effigy was burnt on Guy Fawkes’ night 1938 outside the Royal Exchange. On May Day 1938 Hargrave employed a tactic once used by the Nazi S.A. in the Weimar years, which was to parade Green Shirt uniforms on poles and coat hangers in Hyde Park. In 1938 Green Shirts members began the weekly disruptions in the Public Gallery of the House of Commons, for which they were awarded the ‘Green Oak Leaf’. One of the most fantastical episodes of Green Shirt folklore came in 1940 when the aptly named Ralph Green, walked into Downing Street carrying a bow. With a Cabinet meeting in session, he loosed a green arrow with a Social Credit message on its shaft through a window at No.10.⁸

Despite the several inches of excited newsprint in the daily newspapers which these incidents caused, they failed to revive the flagging fortunes of the Green Shirts. With the dream of a mass political movement dying, the Green Shirts were being reduced to isolated, individual acts of 'resistance'. Hargrave likened the Green Shirts to the 'skirmishers' and 'sharp-shooters' of T.E. Lawrence's 'Arab Revolt'.⁹ The failure to build and sustain a mass movement also concentrated more attention on the ideas and strategies of Hargrave as National Leader. A number of Green Shirt veterans noticed a significant change in Hargrave on his return from Canada. He engaged in an acrimonious row with his long standing Deputy, Raymond Dixon (formerly known as 'Eagle') over decisions made in Hargrave's absence. Criticisms were raised over the disruption of the Social Credit Secretariat meeting, as well as his leadership style in general. One Green Shirt Andrew Carden believed that "from about 1937 onwards the tide was going out" and that Hargrave's character and judgement were failing him. Carden felt that Hargrave was now surrounding himself with "some absolute duds" and resorting to unqualified, exaggerated claims for the movement.¹⁰

With Hargrave's imagination and pageantry failing to re-ignite the public's interest he resorted to his other great strength, public speaking. In 1938 a series of public meetings were launched at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon. Yet even here there is evidence of Hargrave losing his way. A letter to Kathleen Milnes from a member of the public who had attended a Hargrave lecture was "not impressed", criticising him for his negativity.¹¹ Rolf Gardiner was also curious, but described how Hargrave's face had become "more mask-like than ever, his self-dramatisation a pathetic paralysis of inspired purpose."¹² Around

this time Hargrave was also becoming increasingly estranged from his wife, who was disillusioned with Social Credit strategy and yearned for a return to the Woodcraft days.

The Broadsheet was replaced by the eccentric weekly *Message from Hargrave*, a flimsy self-absorbed newsletter which reflected Hargrave's increasing withdrawal into personal plans and interests, in particular his invention for a flight navigation 'moving-map' device alongside paradoxically, his deepening obsession with mysticism. The Social Credit Party all but suspended itself for the duration of the war, with many Green Shirts serving in the Armed Forces. Depression was compounded by a direct hit on the new Social Credit Party Headquarters in Fitzroy Street in May 1941. (Luckily, all old Kibbo Kift regalia and equipment had been moved out of London for the duration of the *Blitz*, to the house of Kathleen Milnes in Evesham.)¹³

According to Webb, Hargrave came under the influence of Charles Boltwood, a spiritualist who had joined the Party and intrigued Hargrave with his methods of healing using 'human radiation'.¹⁴ Hargrave believed he had similar abilities and invested much time in the creation of 'psychograms', abstract paintings that were reputed to hold psychic healing properties. The old Woodcraft love affair with signs and symbols was re-surfacing. In 1943 'Solar Propoganda' was launched, stating that the Green Shirts were in fact 'Solar Men' and that their efforts were founded on a "spiritual basis" so that prayers to the sun should be offered up daily. This owed much to re-reading of Frederick Soddy's *Energy Economics*.¹⁵

The arrival of Aubrey Westlake into the Social Credit Party in 1943 also brought about another bizarre episode with Westlake suggesting the

S.C.P. should reorganise itself in the manner of Arthurian legend, with Westlake adopting the mantle of King Arthur while Hargrave the 'magus', could be Merlin. This idea was quickly dropped. Support expressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury for Social Credit was quickly denied when it became known at Lambeth Palace that Rupert Naylor, a prominent astrologer was a member of the S.C.P. ¹⁶

There was a half-hearted attempt to reanimate the Party in the post war years with the opening of a new headquarters at 33 Craven Terrace. (Curiously, Arnold Leese's Imperial Fascist League had established their Headquarters in the 1930s at 30 Craven Terrace.) However, the Social Credit message seemed out of date with the new era of the Welfare State. Inter-war propaganda techniques were also redundant, the Social Credit 'Evangel' (a touring bus) having failed to capture the public's imagination. The S.C.P. tried to direct its message to new areas of relevance. A demonstration against the atomic bomb was held in July 1946, followed by a similar campaign against bread rationing. In 1948 a 'S.C.P. Agricultural and Husbandry Group' was formed which ironically began to proselytise the merits of Lord Lymington's (now the Ninth Earl of Portsmouth) 'organic bible', *Famine in England*. There was a brief return to the Public Gallery of the House of Commons and Solar propaganda also resurfaced. However the rather devitalised nature of these S.C.P. initiatives can be illustrated by the stunt of Wilfred Price in 1947, who ran onto the pitch at the Oval during a Test Match with a Social Credit banner. Sadly, he chose to do this during the lunchtime interval, thus failing to disrupt the cricket or generate any press interest at all. ¹⁷

Hargrave attempted to replicate the success of fifteen years previously, by standing as a parliamentary candidate for Stoke Newington in 1950. He polled 551 votes. This was to be the last fling of the S.C.P. On May 12th 1951 at 6.00pm, the Party officially dissolved itself on Hargrave's order. Those who had remained loyal to Hargrave during the past thirty years (and there were still a sizeable contingent of old Kibbo Kift,) were left in profound shock. Many thought it an act of ultimate surrender and betrayal, but as Hargrave saw it "the psychic, psychological, and physical forces ranged against us make such a course necessary if we are to escape being 'wiped out'." ¹⁸ As Hargrave had prophetically written in *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* there is a "time to strive and a time to be at rest, to gather up strength, to be enfolded into the earth." ¹⁹

There is a temptation to view the Kibbo Kift and Green Shirts as a 'proto-fascist' organisation with Hargrave as a Mussolini type figure. ²⁰ This needs to be re-examined. It has been quite easy to make out a case for the Kibbo Kift and Green Shirts being practitioners of a fascist outlook and method. The use of uniforms, the open handed salutes, Hargrave's advocacy of the sinister sounding 'Unarmed Military Technique', the parades, drums and flaming torches, all display a political choreography very much in the style of Fascism and National Socialism. Indeed the Green Shirts prided themselves on being smarter and more disciplined than the B.U.F. Blackshirts. What is more, Social Credit can be interpreted as an attempt at taking 'money power' out of the secret cabal of international bankers and giving it to an equally mysterious undemocratic cabal of 'experts'. ²¹

As has already been noted, Hargrave admitted to admiring the “discipline, enthusiasm, and general impetus” of Fascism. He also stated that the Kibbo Kift’s objections to Fascism did not rest with any, “liberal-minded squeamishness.”²² *The Mark* in December 1922, sent congratulations to Mussolini saying “we thank you for showing us the right method in organising a powerful and thoroughly disciplined body capable of penetrating every existing institution.”²³ In the 1920s Hargrave and other leading Kinsfolk would occasionally lecture at meetings of Rotha Lintorn-Orman’s organisation, the ‘British Fascists’. This was a distinctly ‘conservative’, as opposed to ‘radical’, anti-capitalist, fascist grouping which Arnold Leese later described as “Conservatism with Knobs on.”²⁴ Curiously, Hargrave’s background was similar to Lintorn-Orman’s. She had served with an ambulance unit in Serbia during the Great War and had returned home to train Red Cross Volunteer drivers; she also ran a Bournemouth Scout troop. Although no details survive of any of the lectures and debates held with the British Fascists, it is reasonable to assume that the Kibbo Kift had picked up on their increasingly earnest preparations for an expected ‘national emergency’. As has been seen, the idea of an élite group being able to step into the breach of any breakdown in civil order, maintaining public services and providing local and eventually national leadership animated the Kibbo Kift at this time. However, the Kindred was shocked by its ineffectiveness when such an ‘emergency’ did arise in May 1926. The British Fascists also had a rude awakening when their offer to provide ‘civil assistance’ was turned down unless the movement dropped its ‘Fascist’ title and abolished its paramilitary organisation. This caused an internal row with the majority rejecting such demands, whilst a minority group (calling itself ‘the

Loyalists') went on to 'collaborate' with the Governments' 'Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies.'²⁵

Not long after 1926 the British Fascists barred any further Kibbo Kift 'guest speakers'. This may have been in response to the publication in that year of Mrs. Nesta Webster's notorious exposé of international conspiracy *The Socialist Network*. Webster was a member of the British Fascists, having sat on its Grand Council in 1926/7 and a confirmed anti-Semite. She had contributed to the myth of a world-wide Judeo-Masonic conspiracy with the publication in 1919 of *The French Revolution, A Study in Democracy*.²⁶ She was so convinced of her theories that she would never open her front door without keeping a loaded revolver nearby.²⁷ Webster was now certain that the Kibbo Kift formed part of this international Marxist plot. In the manner of pre-Great War 'German spy' paranoia, she was particularly suspicious of the Kin's propensity for map-making as part of its commitment to the Regional Survey. Regular attacks had also been launched on the Kibbo Kift in *The Patriot*, a right wing newspaper founded by the Duke of Northumberland in 1922.²⁸

However, an unofficial request from an unnamed British Fascist member was sent to the Kibbo Kift in 1927 in order to clarify the 'real nature and aims' of the Kindred and to clear up any 'misunderstanding' between the two groups. Hargrave responded to this enquiry publicly, stating that the Kibbo Kift was against "the sinister powers of international finance" which destroy individual freedom and national prosperity. He went on to say that although the Kindred had no policy of excluding Socialists, its concentration on the problem of 'Distribution' as opposed to 'Production' in the economic equation, tended to put most socialists off, who would classify the Kindred as 'reactionary.' He

emphasised the 'independent' stance of the Kindred following the departure of its Left-wing in 1924: "The Kindred stands against all the forces of disruption and disintegration, and it views Bolshevism and Fascism as being, to a very large extent, the children of one parent: - unreasoning force." The Kindred would not be swayed by "Russian mentality" or "nagged into the Italian emotion." Both of these were examples of un-English "overheated, yelling, mob emotion...(and) urban panic."²⁹

In the early 1930s, the Green Shirts also attracted the attentions of the newly formed B.U.F. As mentioned before, Green Shirts were beginning to follow a policy of attending B.U.F. meetings with the purpose of asking the 'Awkward Question' regarding Social Credit. As a result, Mosley himself made a request for clarification from the Green Shirt General Secretary in 1933. In a letter he wrote that whilst Blackshirts "are always glad to see your members, and to answer with courtesy any questions they may address us...we must know where we stand in regard to any projected disorder at our meetings."³⁰ This issue had arisen following the distribution of anti-Blackshirt cartoons and the arrival of a squad of Green Shirts at the B.U.F.'s Headquarters who stated that they were "out to discredit and smash Fascism."³¹ Further to his letter, Mosley decided to investigate Hargrave and the Green Shirts in person. On his arrival at the Old Jewry Headquarters, Mosley and a fellow Blackshirt were served a meal by 'Gray Squirrel' in the Green Shirt canteen while Hargrave, upstairs in his office, kept them waiting for over an hour. According to Hargrave some form of 'amalgamation' was proposed by Mosley, but the offer was declined.³² It should be noted that Social Credit was to be strongly debated in both Leese's Imperial Fascists League and the B.U.F. While rejected as official policy, some

individual Blackshirts did remain Social Credit supporters. Mosley investigated it, but rejected it, not only on economic grounds, but because Douglas believed consumer credits should be a universal right, unlike most Fascists, who would only consider them as a possible reward for personal effort.³³ Ezra Pound, a non-aligned Fascist was a staunch advocate of Social Credit: “even Douglas seems unaware of the profound harmony between his economics and Fascism.”³⁴ Pound maintained a correspondence with Hargrave throughout the 1930s, sending his *Song For The Plain Men Of England* to the Green Shirts in 1935.³⁵

When Green Shirts participated in anti-Fascist demonstrations, fighting inevitably broke out and relations with the Blackshirts worsened. In February 1934 a column of Green Shirts engaged with “a lorry load of Fascists”.³⁶ In May 1935 Ashley Lewis, the son of a Russian Jewish émigré and Green Shirt District Leader, led his Threat in throwing the Fascists out of Finsbury Park. The following week the Blackshirts returned and Lewis engaged in the so-called ‘Battle of the Ridley Road’ in Dalston, for which he was honoured with the Green Oak Leaf. ‘Gray Squirrel’ was battered at a bus stop following a Green Shirt intervention at a meeting in Shoreditch where William Joyce was speaking. The Blackshirts anxious to control the streets, now regarded the Green Shirts as a great an enemy as the Communists. An assault by Fascists on the Green Shirts Headquarters in Liverpool in June 1936 which resulted in the hospitalisation of two Green Shirts, followed by an attack on an Ex-Serviceman’s Demonstration Against Fascism headed by a Green Shirt column, led to questions being raised in Parliament and the hastening of the Public Order Bill.³⁷

Despite Fascist provocation the Green Shirts according to most police reports did maintain poise and discipline. Green Shirt violence when it occurred (despite the uncharacteristic disruption of the Social Credit Secretariat meeting in 1937) was of a peculiarly English, rather than 'Continental' style, witness the green arrows, green bricks and mounted effigies.³⁸

The Communist Party regarded the Green Shirts as a nuisance more than anything else: an attempt to divert the attention of the masses away from the class issue. The Green Shirts had asked the Communist Party to undertake a study of Social Credit, but never seriously entertained the possibility of them converting to such a 'radical' theory. Violence between Communists and Green Shirts was rare and Green Shirts often attended Communist Party, Trade Union, Independent Labour Party and Co-operative demonstrations and activities. It should also be noted that Young Communist and Jewish Youth groups were also to adopt uniform in the increasingly hostile political atmosphere of the 1930s. Method and appearance should not cloud the fact that the Kindred, even in its Green Shirt manifestation were still committed to essentially anti-Fascist concepts such as World Government, the Leisure State, and the merits of 'primitive', non-European cultures. Despite the Kindred's 'illiberal' rhetoric concerning Eugenics and the 'Reconstruction of the Race' (ideas which could be found as much in Edwardian Socialist and Fabian literature) the Kibbo Kift and Green Shirts lacked nearly all of the Fascism's classical points of reference.³⁹

The Kibbo Kift was audacious in providing a critique of modern society that went beyond reliance on pre-industrial, national-historical models so beloved by European 'conservative revolutionaries' and the Radical Right. Of

course the Kindred saw itself as a specifically 'English' movement, but it refused to fall into the trap of Romantic nationalism with its "self-pity, herd-pity, sentimental soul-sobbing..."⁴⁰ Their Kibbo Kift 'Robin Hood' style was obviously a deliberate channelling of English nationalism. Curiously, in their Social Credit stage, they saw themselves even more as 'outlaws' in the battle for Social Credit. The Abdication Crisis saw the Green Shirts give full backing to Edward VIII who was portrayed in the manner of Richard Coeur de Lion as being ousted by Establishment interests. Hargrave believed that Edward could become sympathetic to Social Credit, so he mandated Kathleen Milnes to design an emblazoned declaration of support for Edward, which was delivered to him personally by Milnes in 1937.⁴¹

The Kibbo Kift's Anglo-Saxonism, its Company of Archers and its Kin Feasts existed quite happily alongside its Red Indianism, Yoga and the 'Test of the Stone Age Man'. The Kindred paid their respects to the history of Arnold Toynbee, the Hammonds, Chesterton and Belloc and that of an English 'Golden Age' of peasantries, yeomen and paternal squires, but ultimately they sought inspiration from man's common pre-historic past.

In contrast, the Tory-Organic movement embraced the picture of a nation in decline since the Industrial Revolution, if not before then. The Reformation, the Enclosures and the Repeal of the Corn Laws were considered landmarks in the destruction of England's rural foundation. The historian Arthur Bryant (an associate of Lymington's) in his *English Saga 1840-1940* saw the nation as having sold its soul for 'untrammelled growth' and 'material profit'.⁴² H.J. Massingham celebrated William Cobbett as a Tory-Radical who had identified Protestant-Puritanism, Commercialism and 'abstract thinking' as

contributing to the poisoning of contemporary society. Massingham held up in contrast the ideal of 'the whole society' where "men thought in terms of goods, not money, a weal, not wealth, of home, not distance, of quality, not quantity, of self-help, not parasitism, of mutual aid, not beggar my neighbour, of nature as life, not atoms and of God as living, not obsolete..."⁴³

Massingham, who finally converted to Roman Catholicism during the Second World War, as well as to Social Credit under the tutelage of Maurice Reckett, saw the Golden Age as essentially Catholic and medieval. It had been the 'Eleanor Cross' at Geddington in Northamptonshire that revealed to him a world in which "God, beauty, nature, work and man" were all in "harmonious relation" with the village as the "corner-stone of English civilisation."⁴⁴

In contrast, the Kibbo Kift's parading of their Saxon 'Wooden Plough' was no evocation of the 'Norman Yoke' argument, that of the landed birthright of the English peoples being stolen by the feudal oppressors, but a mere celebration of Anglo-Saxon handicrafts. The belief in the common ascent of mankind made 'racial antagonism' simply unscientific. As Hargrave saw it "the fact that national patriotic feeling has overcome race antagonism time and time again is strong evidence in support of those who desire to build a World Culture, which will digest the narrow nationalisms and make a common ligature between the races."⁴⁵

The Kindred and Green Shirts lacked an aggressive style of nationalism. By the mid -1920s Hargrave declared his approval of 'regional patriotisms' and also criticised the 'bloodless' rhetoric of internationalism, but he still maintained that "while it is right and proper to celebrate the Magick of your 'own

place'...the soil of your own region, this cannot serve as the foundation for a sound national policy."⁴⁶

The Kindred saw that European and World Policy would have to be part of a National Programme unless one was to be "bewitched by the will-o'-the-wisp of Romanticism." Regional Patriotism and national identity could find their places within World Unity. There was no contradiction: the Kindred "wants England to be England, just as it wants Mr. Smith to be Mr. Smith and not simply a British national."⁴⁷ Kibbo Kift banners celebrating 'the spirit of the place' (such as the White Horse at Uffington and Avebury) stood alongside the Kindred's 'World Flag of Mercator's Projection'.

Gardiner also adopted a strong regional focus. As opposed to the ethos of mass production and centralisation, local regional economies 'rooted in the soil' through regional centres and estates, were to become the source of political power and cultural inspiration, thus ensuring regional pluralism and diversity. Massingham also agreed: "The more faithful its people to the region, the greater were their works."⁴⁸ As Trentmann notes, Gardiner explored the viability of 'inter-regional units' as replacements for the nation-state. In *World Without End* Gardiner discussed the British turning away from Empire, towards northern Europe centred around the Baltic and North Sea. In an expression of 'interlocality' rather than 'internationalism', a modern form of the Hanseatic League would be based around the cities of Riga, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Bergen, Bremen, London and Aberdeen. This would be similar to a 'magical ring' of evergreen trees that Gardiner planted at Springhead in memory of his uncle Balfour, "a green polyphony... a federation of individual entities."⁴⁹

Hargrave always favoured the individual over the collective. Social Credit's promise was the guarantee of personal economic freedom: "The State is not more important than the individual, because the individual is the State... and the State has no existence apart from the individuals who are said to compose it."⁵⁰ As Seton said about Baden-Powell, the same can be said for Hargrave's aims as opposed to Fascism's: "My aim was to make a man, Baden-Powell's was to make the soldier."⁵¹

If the Fascists looked to Machiavelli, then the Kindred looked to Lao-Tse. The Kibbo Kift looked forward to the replacement of the present day competitive 'individualism' by a:

Concrete, vitalised integrity of individual purpose... people will associate one with another, not because they have to be herded together to maintain a commercial war, but because they have ideas and emotions in common springing from a life that is not curbed and cramped by necessary drudgery. They will get together for creative play - for fun - and the State will become a living thing.⁵²

This brings us to the 'Leisure State'. Under the 'mathematical correctness' of Social Credit "a very large number of people will be partly or entirely released from industry, but able to live within some margin of comfort upon dividends which they will draw on script held as a birthright by shareholders in the British Commonwealth."⁵³ What is more, with the continuous application of automative production processes even more would be without work and 'at leisure'. The Kindred denied that this held any terrors for them. Any talk about the masses not knowing how to spend their leisure time constructively was mere hypocrisy by the 'leisured' ruling classes. It was illogical to deny the progress of the 'Labour-Saving Revolution'. It was perverse for Socialists to be talking about the 'Nobility of Labour' and for capitalists to be discussing the 'criminality of idleness' and for them both to say in the spirit

of St. Paul, “you must work before you eat, even if there is plenty of food and your work is not required.”⁵⁴ As the popular Green Shirt slogan said: ‘Would the Maggot Starve if the Apple was to Big?’ In a ‘Song’ to Ned Ludd, Hargrave declared that “you hit the thing in front of your nose as hard as you could. Good for you! – but not for us. We go about to take the machine alive, to control its life’s blood, a colourless blood, and invisible, but most potent. Hail to you, half-wit!”⁵⁵

Whilst Hargrave refused to descend in to anti-Semitism even under the pressure of Social Credit, regrettably Gardiner increasingly resorted to its easy emotionalism in the 1930s. He had become infected through contact with the Dorset cell of the English Array. Gardiner in fact went on to besmirch Hargrave’s background. His mother was part Hungarian-Jewish, which prompted Gardiner to recall that “Hargrave was predominantly a Jew”, “a Hebrew prophet” and “his Jewish intellect obtruded abstractions.”⁵⁶ Ugly rumours spread as to his German sympathies in the mid-1930s.

Gardiner was to have high hopes for the seizure of power by the National Socialists in Germany in 1933, interpreting it as a victory for German youth movement ideals, especially considering the Nazis seemingly pro-rural, pro-peasant commitments. Like many others he considered that a strong, revitalised Germany would act as a bulwark against Bolshevism coming from the East. Alongside Soviet Communism’s many faults, the anti-peasant policy of collectivisation was held to be a cardinal sin. However, the effective ‘dissolution’ of the German Youth organisations with their merging into the state-controlled *Hitler-Jugend*, as well as the fall from grace of many of his friends and colleagues, embarrassed and depressed Gardiner. The reality of the

Nazi regime was that the old nineteenth century ideals of the State and Mechanised Power were once again supreme.⁵⁷

Gardiner still kept faith with Walter Darré, Hitler's 'green' and pro-peasant Minister for Agriculture who had invited Lymington and Gardiner on two lecture tours to Germany on organic farming in the late 1930s. The apparent 'distortion' of Darré's ideas by Hitler and his dismissal in 1941 finally confirmed the bankruptcy of Nazism. In 1940 Hargrave delivered a radio broadcast on the B.B.C. attacking the Nazi's for managing to create nothing and only exploiting and destroying genuine human aspirations and ideals. "This happened in Germany, where an overwhelming movement of new generations created fresh forms of human association in defiance of that age, but where the values resulting were captured and employed by the leaders of a political caucus for their own unscrupulous ends."⁵⁸

As Wright notes, there was too much 'blood' and not enough 'soil' for Gardiner, but Lymington did not seek to qualify his own Nazi sympathies.⁵⁹ In December 1938, Lymington established *The New Pioneer* with the aid of John Beckett and William Joyce, two former Mosleyites who had been considered too extreme for the B.U.F. The journal arose out of 'The British Council Against European Commitments' which Lymington had established in a bid to counter 'Czech propaganda'.⁶⁰ *The New Pioneer* with contributions from B.U.F. men (such as A.K.Chesterton and General J.F.C. Fuller,) Mystery and Array Kinsmen (such as Anthony Ludovici and John de Rutzen,) as well as Rolf Gardiner, campaigned vigorously against war with Germany. As the paper put it: "Whoever won the battles of a European war, it would be a victory for the Jews and Bolsheviks."⁶¹ It also launched an assault on liberal industrial society.

As Lymington put it "London is already half a foreign city, where English faces are almost a surprise."⁶² Articles on '*Old Country Remedies*' by 'Agincourt' (Richard de Grey) and adverts for *The Hand book of Modern Pig-Farming*, co-existed side by side with calls by Lymington for Germany to launch a 'holy' ecological war against the Soviet Union in a bid to save her indigenous pine forests from Communist despoliation: "It would be a war more justifiable than a crusade."⁶³

The paper also lent support to the Marquis of Tavistock's short-lived British People's Party, an anti-war, Social Credit, 'third way' venture with John Beckett as its Honorary Secretary. The B.P.P's only notable achievement was managing to secure the support of the Arabian explorer H. St. John Philby (the father of the notorious Kim Philby) to fight on its anti-war platform at the Hythe by-election in 1939.⁶⁴

Lymington, who in the 1930s had received invitations to meet with amongst others, Hitler, Mussolini, Goering, Vico von Bülow (head of the German *Stahlhelm*) and Admiral Horthy (who appealed to Lymington's aristocratic tastes) escaped internment in 1940, unlike Mosley and a good proportion of his B.U.F. lieutenants. Rather, Lymington was to become a well known face at the Ministry of Agriculture and received praise for his Chairmanship of the Hampshire War Agricultural Committee.

The Kindred in both its Woodcraft and Green Shirt incarnations, provides the historian with a unique phenomenon in British history. Considering the Kin's emphasis on order, discipline, ceremonial technique and Woodcraft method, no similar experiment has ever been attempted with such intensity. As has been stated, the Woodcraft movement could not have come before the onset

of the Great War, therefore the Kindred was an historical response to a specific time. The former Green Shirt 'Bill' Tacey expressed sympathy with contemporary so-called 'New Age travellers', but he despaired of their lack of 'discipline' and 'cleanliness'. He saw them as a manifestation of a merely emotional response which noble as that might be had no real 'backbone' behind it to make their ethos work. They needed 'a Hargrave'.⁶⁵ One is reminded of Hargrave's criticism of Gardiner as having 'rhythm, but no intellect.'

Hargrave was still convinced of the ultimate 'truth' of Social Credit, though pessimistic about its potential for success. This allowed him the luxury of never having to analyse the failure of the Kindred. Gardiner described White Fox as being like an Old Testament prophet and indeed, Hargrave was fond of dipping into allusions about Protestant heroes such as John Bunyan and Oliver Cromwell. To this Prophet of the New Age, Woodcraft was the Word which became manifest in Social Credit. The Woodcraft ideal could only be reached through Social Credit. However, the 'powers of darkness' had conspired to kill off the Social Credit movement though its truth remained eternal. The 'New Testament' of Social Credit superseded the Woodcraft method as the way of saving the world. Thus all eyes should turn to Social Credit; it would open up the discovery and cultivation of the spiritual dimension within the individual, releasing mankind from the burdens of the material world.

However this ignores Woodcraft's place within the historical environment. Paradoxically, Woodcraft which fed on an essentially Liberal-Transcendentalist enjoyment of the Open-Air life failed to ignite any response within the populist enthusiasm for the countryside in the inter-war period. The reasons for this are both internal and external. Internally, the Kibbo Kift was

fundamentally a one-man movement which regarded itself as an exclusive élite. Its rituals and language as well as its discipline, were designed to keep out all but the most committed and to develop a unique group identity. Hargrave was not interested in leading a mass movement until he had abandoned Woodcraft as the weapon of social change. By the late 1920s the Kibbo Kift was able to see the reasons why people were not attracted to it. Its technique of cultivating an 'extra-ordinary' form had worked too well and they had become too introverted, inward looking and enclosed. To their contemporaries, they looked just as perplexing as they do to today's historians. There was a large gulf between the Kindred and the outside world. On a hike to Runnymede a passing motorist was overheard remarking as he slowed down for the Kin Wok, that they must be Catholics on account of what appeared to be a 'statue of the Madonna' being held aloft. The message of the Kindred was falling on deaf ears. They were too complex, contrary and fantastical. They had trained themselves for the leadership of Youth, but eventually they believed they had located a constituency for leadership amongst the urban unemployed. Here again they failed to win mass allegiance. Hargrave's leadership was both inspiring and simultaneously debilitating. He could attract and repel in equal measure. People found it very difficult not to have a strong opinion about the man. For example, criticism could be levelled at him for his insistence on autocratic 'direct leadership' which was simply too inappropriate for a British political movement.

But perhaps the real lesson of Hargrave lies in his own realisation that Woodcraft would never succeed in a changing England, despite the apparent popularity of the Open-air life. The late 1920s and 1930s saw 'hiking for hiking's sake', largely unorganised, apolitical and un-ideological rather than

‘camping for World Government.’ From 1900 England was becoming increasingly suburbanised and seeking contact with rural pleasures, but this did not automatically translate into political allegiances. Instead, England’s ‘rural’ (as opposed to agrarian) concerns when they were heard, were voiced by single-issue environmental campaigns and causes such as those offered by the National Trust, the Council for the Protection of Rural England, or the Society for the Protection of Birds. As Mandler notes, these groups represented only a small minority of the British population anyway. If membership of the Kibbo Kift was considered to be low, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings only had 443 members by 1910.⁶⁶ If one was concerned about the growing level of roadside advertisements or the aesthetic defacement of Stonehenge, one did not need to hike in a strictly disciplined formation. Membership of the Coal Smoke Abatement Society did not necessarily imply a wish to overturn the existing social order.⁶⁷

The failure of rural nostalgia to gain an ideological dimension can be seen in the growth of apolitical countryside leisure trends. One could also point to the growth in the ‘sub-suburban’ developments of the countryside as charted by Colin Ward. This was the plethora of private ‘plots’ that grew up in the inter-war period comprising of old caravans, buses, railway carriages and wagons, wooden shacks, army surplus huts and even garden sheds which were often established on uncultivated or abandoned land, as well as near ‘beauty spots’. These so-called ‘plotlands’ were to be found on beaches, cliffs, woods and open common land, becoming the bane of environmental conservationists. Ugly, disfiguring and haphazard as they were, they nevertheless constituted an attempt by ordinary people (who at that time were still relatively free from restrictive

planning laws) to seek an independent, privatised and largely apolitical communion with the Open-Air life. As 'Blue Swift' would have said, they were simply 'getting on with it'. In many ways the 'plotlanders' were exhibiting much of the Woodcraft ethic in that they were withdrawing from the towns to find recreation in the countryside. Their plots were small islands of freedom, often home made in a simple, sparse style, allowing for creativity, initiative and 'rugged individualism'.⁶⁸ As well as these Liberal values they also encapsulated a Tory-Radical rejection of the city, the ideal of 'wholeness' and the search for an organic unity between man and nature. The 'plotlanders' were searching for the Simple Life as a way to self-fulfilment, in itself a 'modern' practice similar to the Woodcrafters and the Kinship in Husbandry

Both Hargrave and Gardiner reacted against the modern age, but they differed dramatically in their responses. The Tory-Organic philosophy saw the need for a fundamental shift in the town-country balance, in favour of agriculture. The Woodcrafters in contrast, believed more in continuity, in easing the 'shock' of transition to the modern world and in a slow, biological, social and cultural transformation. Hargrave's impatience with such a strategy necessitated a more 'traditional' political-economic solution in the shape of Social Credit. The Kibbo Kift's failure, if one excludes internal factors, indicates the existence of a large proportion of the populous unable or unwilling to respond to such romantic overtures and seemingly content with their own more orthodox responses. By 1900 Britain had already reached its present day level of around 80% of the population living in towns and cities, therefore as Mandler points out, the nation was in fact more than "coming to terms with its urbanity" and preparing for its suburban future.⁶⁹ Offer records the

disappointment felt by the Fabian journalist R.C.K. Ensor in the 1900s over the failure of urban workers to appreciate wild flowers. Even in the inter-war period most holiday makers still sought the gaudy pleasures of the seaside resort.⁷⁰

The Tory-Organic tradition shared much of the same terrain as the Kindred. Their analyses of the shortcomings of contemporary society as well as their language of ‘decadence’ and ‘degeneration’ were remarkably similar. As Gardiner, Lymington and Hargrave would all have agreed, in the words of Lord Northbourne, “the physical life is the foundation of mental and spiritual life.”⁷¹ Both organisations were attempts at restoring the ‘art of living’ as illustrated in their concern for handicrafts, or correct breathing and posture. Anthony Ludovici, a keen student of Hinduism and Buddhist culture, emphasised the crucial importance of sitting, walking and breathing so that “every act becomes a feat of conscious self-discipline.”⁷² Whereas the Kibbo Kift saw Woodcraft as the physical path to spiritual refreshment and mental clarity, Gardiner saw agriculture as the way. There could be no doubting the spiritual content of farming, as Lord Northbourne put it “farming is concerned primarily with life...farming must be on the side of religion, poetry and the arts, rather than the side of business...”⁷³

During the War, Gardiner and Lady Eve Balfour together with the Kinship in Husbandry circle set about the amassing of evidence that led to the creation of the Soil Association in 1945. Balfour’s book *The Living Soil* was virtually the founding document of the organisation, in so far as it brought together as a summation, all the ecological evidence and analysis of the past twenty years. Gardiner and Lymington sat on the Soil Association’s Council with Jorian Jenks (a former agricultural ‘expert’ for the B.U.F. who had ‘gone

organic' whilst reading Kinship in Husbandry texts during his internment) who was appointed as editor of the Soil Association journal *Mother Earth*.

Thus the Tory-Organic tradition, true to its ideals, found a real expression in the living, material world campaigning for an alternative to the post-war growth of 'agri-business' and industrial farming. Though never lacking self worth, Lymington nevertheless felt his life's work had been vindicated when Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring* in 1962. A new wave of counter-culture was on the verge of discovering 'greenness' for itself.

Despite this however, Lymington who was in a state of disillusionment with post-war Britain, departed to start a new life farming in Kenya. Gardiner carried on and developed the traditions of Springhead. Having abandoned the S.C.P., Hargrave now devoted his energies and time to psychic healing, a study of the German mystic Paracelsus and latterly, official recognition of his 'moving-map' device.⁷⁴

Woodcraft did survive though. The Order of Woodcraft Chivalry and the Woodcraft Folk were still small and family orientated, but their refusal to engage in extravagant social and political theories ensured their survival, if not their growth. They were happy to remain in their own small, enclosed worlds. Aubrey Westlake admittedly did attempt to convert the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry to Social Credit, but this was rejected. Woodcraft was at its most successful when dealing with its primary aim of the natural, healthy and imaginative upbringing of the child. Ironically, both 'Lavengri' and 'Hawk' taught their own children Kibbo Kift-style Woodcraft much to the annoyance of their local Scout leaders. Stripped of its Edwardian urgency and its New Age

grand expectations, Woodcraft still retained its remarkable educational programme.

The New Age has never really left us. Its thread sometimes disappears or is obscured from view, but now it is getting thicker and stronger. Spring has come round again and nature-worship is once more acceptable. In 1969 Gardiner recognised his past now evident in the new counter-culture. He returned to his boyhood evocation of St. Joachim: "The astrologers tell us that we have moved out of the millennium which heralded the coming of Christ, into a new age. The sun rises no longer in the sign of the Fishes, but in the sign of Aquarius...and this is man the gardener, who waters the parched, poisoned soil with the waters of the Spirit, which makes the earth blossom again. The post-modern age will see this come to pass: the age of the Holy Spirit."⁷⁵

This thread is essentially too strong to be broken because it responds to some of mankind's fundamental hopes, needs and aspirations in the modern world. Even out of the nemesis of Nazi Germany in 1945 amidst the bombed out ruins of Munich, Gusto Gräser was spotted picking his way through the rubble, thin and gaunt, with sandals on his feet and a bag of vegetables slung over his shoulder. He still carried the smile of Lao-Tse on his lips.⁷⁶

And Woodcraft might still surprise us all. As White Fox said, 'watch Woodcraft. It's slow, but certain.' But for the time being though, let Woodcraft retire "back to the place of dwelling, to the encampment. Plunge, then, into the deep sleep that knows no fitful dreaming."⁷⁷

Footnotes For Conclusion

¹ As Drakeford notes, the first issue of *Attack* was remarkably successful, boding well for the future: beginning as a local new-sheet for South West London Green Shirts, based in Battersea,

its first print run of 300 sold out; 800 of the second issue also sold out leading to a second printing; by the fourth issue, some 2,000 copies were being printed and were selling outside the Battersea area. M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters. The Green Shirts in England* (London: Macmillan, 1997), pp.133-134

² Ibid., p. 165

³ For a comparison with other minority party election results, see, M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, pp.175-176; see also F.WS.Craig, *Minor Parties at British Parliamentary Elections 1885-1974* (London: Macmillan, 1975).

⁴ M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, pp.178-180

⁵ Interview between Wilfred Price and Mark Drakeford; Ibid., p.191

⁶ Ibid., p.183

⁷ J.Hargrave, 'On the Streets With Flags and Drums', in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.13, no.133 (July 1937), YMA/KK 168 (a)

⁸ A good summary of Green Shirts stunts is given in M. Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, pp. 190, 197, 199, 200, 201, 217.

⁹ J.Hargrave, 'A Cloud of Skirmishers', in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.13, no.134 (Aug-Dec1937), YMA/KK 168 (a)

¹⁰ Interview between Andrew Carden and Mark Drakeford; cited in M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, p.193

¹¹ Letter from a 'Mr. Howard' to Kathleen Milnes ('Blue Falcon'), (Dec.11th. 1938), YMA/KK 94 (C)

¹² H.R.Gardiner, 'D.H.Lawrence and Youth Movements of the 'Twenties', in *Wessex: Letters From Springhead*, 4th. Series, no.2 (Springhead: Christmas 1959), p. 45

¹³ Letters from Hargrave to Kathleen Milnes, October 15th 1940 and September 22nd 1939 YMA/KK 94 (B)

¹⁴ J.Webb, *The Occult Establishment* (Illinois: Open Court, 1976), pp.123-4

¹⁵ Ibid., p.124

¹⁶ YMA/KK 104 A Hargrave manuscript (undated) seems to allude to this. 'Bill' Tacey in an interview also recollected this proposal with some amusement (14-12-94)

¹⁷ M. Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, pp. 205-6

¹⁸ J.Hargrave, *Message From Hargrave*, (April 13th. 1951), YMA/KK 183

¹⁹ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* (London: Duckworth, 1927; reprint edn., London: William Maclellan, 1979), p.319

²⁰ Ignoring his pro-Semitism, Anna Bramwell in *Ecology. A History* described Hargrave as the nearest England ever had to a Hitler, p.112. Thayer also highlighted the mystical irrationalism of Hargrave and the blind dedication of his followers. Also, unsubstantiated reports that Hargrave associated with ex-B.U.F. members Verdon-Roe, Henry Williamson and J. F. C Fuller in the war years. G.Thayer, *British Political* (London: Anthony Blond, 1965), pp. 108-112. M Rosenthal comments on the anti-democratic, élitist, anti-homosexual, anti-feminist nature of the Kindred and the autocratic leadership style of Hargrave, see *The Character Factory*, pp. 148-151.

²¹ The emergence of contemporary 'third way' and Radical Right groups in Europe and Australia and Canada who claim to adhere to Social Credit economics can blur the historical perspective. This has also happened with groups, such as the UK's International Third Position, who, under the influence of Derek Holland and Nick Griffin, claim the Radical Catholic and Distributist mantle of G.K.Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc.

²² J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, p. 244-5

²³ 'To Signor Mussolini', in *The Mark*, Vol.1, no7 (December 1922), YMA/KK 165 (a)

²⁴ A.Leece, *Out of Step: Events in the Two Lives of an Anti-Jewish Camel-Doctor* (Guildford, 1951), p.49

²⁵ See R.Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right. British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany 1933-39* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p.88

²⁶ *Ibid*, p.62

²⁷ Webb, *The Occult Establishment*, p.129

²⁸ See 'Attack on the K.K. by Nesta Webster. Regional Survey Map-Making a Preparation for Espionage', in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.2, no.14 (September 1926), YMA/KK 168 (a). For attacks on the K.K. by *The Patriot*, see the following issues: July 19th1923; July 26th.1923; June 12th.1924; April 2nd. 1925; March 17th.1926.

²⁹ J.Hargrave, 'A Reply to Several Questions Regarding the Kindred of the Kibbo Kift', in *The Broadsheet*, Vol.3, no26 (September 1927), YMA/KK 168 (a)

³⁰ Letter from Oswald Mosley to John Hargrave, (January 25th.1933), YMA/KK 43

³¹ *Ibid*.

³² M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, p.125. According to Hargrave, the Green Shirts were also to be propositioned by the Nazis. He was approached in London on two occasions, with the second time seeing a "top-ranking" German envoy making an offer of money to the movement: "Both offers were refused." See J.Hargrave, (memo.1976), YMA/KK 217

³³ For debates amongst Fascists on Social Credit see, Arthur Raven-Thompson, 'British Fascism and Douglas Social Credit', *The Age of Plenty* (July-September 1934); Ezra Pound, 'A Social Creditor Serves Notice', in *The Fascist Quarterly*, Vol.2, no.4 (October 1936); see also M.B.Stein, *The Dynamics of Right Wing Protest* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1973), p.36; J.Craven, 'Health, Wholeness, Holiness': *Radical Right and Fascist Attitudes to the British Countryside 1928-1939* (University of Birmingham, M.Phil. Thesis, 1993), p.81

³⁴ A.Hamilton, *The Appeal of Fascism* (London: Anthony Blond, 1971), p.287

³⁵ One of Ezra Pound's verses read:
"We won the War, we've lost the peace,
Bankers rot our English state.
God above and Hell below!
Have we a right to live and eat!"

The Song also contained anti-Semitic overtones:

"Lords of England under the sod
Talbot and Cromwell, Warwick dead,
Tudor and York were island-bred,
What was their Kinship, Mother of God,

With the hook-nosed Zaharoff,
With Sief, and Simon and Sarvazy;
With Isaacs, with Goldberg and Stein?
Give us our due and damn Lloyd George.”

YMA/KK 217, Letter from Ezra Pound to J.Hargrave, (January 23rd 1925), YMA/KK 217. According to Bramwell, both A.V.Roe and the ‘Illuminated’ General J.F.C. Fuller (a one-time admirer of Aleister Crowley), who were ex-B.U.F., converted to Social Credit during World War II though, again, there is no evidence of any contact between them and Hargrave. See A.Bramwell, *Ecology in the Twentieth Century. A History* (London & New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p.109

³⁶ *The New Age*, 1st March 1934

³⁷ *The Broadsheet* July 1935 YMA/KK 168 and April 1936; see *New Age* 4th June 1936 and *New Age* 22nd October 1936, both YMA/KK 191; see Drakeford, p.182 and interview with Ashley Lewis, 20-9-95

³⁸ A Report filed on the Kibbo Kift by the Special Branch in 1925 concluded that “it does not appear to be dangerous”; no further investigation was planned, (Public Records Office Ho.45/24966); cited in M.Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, pp. 70-71. There was also a fair amount of sympathy amongst some Parliamentarians towards the Green Shirts, with two Green Shirt deputations being met at the House of Commons by the Rt. Hon. P.C.Loftus, M.P. and Lord Strabolgi from the House of Lords.

³⁹ For relations between the Kibbo Kift, Green Shirts and the Communist Party, see Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters*, pp. 123, 127 and 181. An example of Green Shirts engaged in the “United Front Against Fascism” was on March 22nd 1936, when Green Shirts and the International Socialist Party representatives spoke in London on the same platform: see *The Broadsheet*, April 1936. Numerous other liaisons between the Communist Party and the Green Shirts can be noted, see, for example, *The Broadsheet*, March 1935.

⁴⁰ J.Hargrave, ‘The Foundation of a European Policy. An Epistle’, in *The Nomad*, Vol.2, no.11 (April 1925), YMA/KK 165 (a)

⁴¹ See Letter from J.Hargrave to ‘Blue Falcon’ (Kathleen Milnes), (July 3rd 1939), YMA/KK 94 (B). On July 16th 1937 ‘Blue Falcon’ delivered the ‘Address of the Kin’ to the Duke of Windsor at Schlöss Wasserleonberg in Austria.

⁴² M.J.Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.87

⁴³ H.J. Massingham, *The Tree of Life* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1943), p. 149

⁴⁴ H.J. Massingham, *Remembrance* (London: Batsford, 1942), p.73 and H.J.Massingham, *The Tree of Life*, p.67

⁴⁵ J.Hargrave, ‘Letters to the Kindred’, in *The Nomad*, Vol.2, no.10 (March 1925), YMA/KK 166 (a)

⁴⁶ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, p. 250

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ H.J.Massingham, *Remembrance*, p.103; cited in F.Trentmann, ‘Civilization and its Discontents: English Neo-Romanticism and the Transformation of Anti-Modernism in Twentieth Century Culture’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.29 (1994), p.608

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- ⁴⁹ P. Wright, *The Village That Died for England. The Strange Story of Tyneham* (London: Cape, 1995), p.202; H.R.Gardiner, *World Without End* (London: Cobden-Sanderson, 1932), pp. 42-48
- ⁵⁰ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, p.249
- ⁵¹ Ernest Thompson Seton, *A History of the Boy Scouts* (unpublished manuscript; undated), p.42, Seton Papers; cited in B.Keller, *Black Wolf: the Life of Ernest Thompson Seton* (Vancouver & Toronto: Douglas & MacIntyre, 1986), p.169
- ⁵² J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, p.251
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.176
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.181
- ⁵⁵ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of Kibbo Kift*, p.279
- ⁵⁶ H.R.Gardiner, 'D.H.Lawrence and the Youth Movements of the 'Twenties', pp. 43, 45
- ⁵⁷ H.R.Gardiner, *World Without End*, p.33
- ⁵⁸ H.R.Gardiner BBC Radio broadcast (September 1940); transcript in the possession of Anna Bramwell; see also H.R.Gardiner, 'Generations and Leadership', in *The New English Weekly*, (Dec.12th. 1940); cited in J. Craven, 'Health, Wholeness, Holiness', pp. 195-196
- ⁵⁹ Patrick Wright, *The Village That Died For England*, p. 171
- ⁶⁰ See J.Craven, 'Health, Wholeness, Holiness', p.125
- ⁶¹ Viscount Lymington in *The New Pioneer*, Vol.1, no.6 (May 1939)
- ⁶² Viscount Lymington in *The New Pioneer*, Vol.1, no.5 (April 1939)
- ⁶³ Viscount Lymington, 'Soil and Civilisation' Pt.4, in *The New Pioneer*, Vol.1, no.5 (April 1939)
- ⁶⁴ See R.Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right*, pp.352-3
- ⁶⁵ Interview between 'Bill' Tacey ('Will Scarlet') and J. Craven, (14-12-94)
- ⁶⁶ P.Mandler, 'Against "Englishness": English Culture and the Limits to Rural Nostalgia, 1850-1940', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (1997), p.169
- ⁶⁷ P.Gould, *Early Green Politics. Back to Nature, Back to the Land, and Socialism in Britain 1880-1900* (Brighton: the Harvester Press, 1988), p. 16
- ⁶⁸ See Colin Ward and Dennis Hardy, 'Plots of Freedom', in *Arcadia for All* (London: Mansell, 1984), pp.24-29
- ⁶⁹ P.Mandler, 'Against "Englishness"', pp. 160 and 171
- ⁷⁰ Avner Offer, *Property and Politics 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.349
- ⁷¹ Lord Northbourne, 'The Land', a speech delivered at the Economic Reform Club (May 19th. 1938); cited in *The New Pioneer*, Vol.1, no.10 (September 1939)

⁷² Anthony Ludovici, *Man: an Indictment* (London: Constable & Co., 1927), p.355

⁷³ Lord Northbourne, *Look to the Land* (London: Dent, 1940), p.85

⁷⁴ Hargrave claimed to have invented a 'moving-map device' as a navigational aid for pilots in 1938. With the aid of a Green Shirt RAF pilot McKinley Thompson (who was to be killed in 1940), and a young optical engineer Cedric Williams, a prototype was built and tested by the RAF. According to Chris Judge Smith, "it was officially acknowledged as being 'very ingenious and extremely useful'...(but) was expensive to produce and would require gyroscope control to achieve its full potential. All available gyroscopes were earmarked for bomb-sights and the project was shelved for the duration." However, in 1967, whilst reading the Sunday papers, Hargrave saw, in an article about the new Concorde supersonic aircraft, a picture of the cockpit in which he could clearly identify his moving map device of some thirty years previously. A long and bitter battle was fought over the course of the next nine years, culminating in a Public Enquiry held in 1976. "The Enquiry conceded that Hargrave's invention had in fact been copied and developed to create the modern instrument but disallowed any Award on a point of technical procedure. It was a crushing disappointment from which he never fully recovered," Chris Judge Smith, *John Hargrave 'White Fox' – A Biographical Note* (Unpublished manuscript; undated)

⁷⁵ H.R.Gardiner, 'Harvest Thanksgiving: Cerne Abbas', cited in A.Best, ed., *Water Springing from the Earth: An Anthology of the Writings of Rolf Gardiner* (Springhead: 1972), p. 294

⁷⁶ M.Green, *Mountain of Truth: the Counter Culture Begins, Ascona, 1900-1920* (Hanover & London: University Press of New England, 1986), pp.78-80. Gräser died in 1958. He received a pauper's burial.

⁷⁷ J.Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, p.321

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Most of the Kibbo Kift and related Woodcraft papers and journals are housed at the London School of Economics' 'Youth Movement Archive'. The archive has also collected together a good deal of the private manuscripts and letters of Kinsfolk as well as Green Shirts. This makes it an invaluable resource for understanding both the full nature of the Woodcraft and Social Credit movements.

A number of interviews with former Kinsfolk and Green Shirts were obtained during the course of my studies:

'Will Scarlet': 'Bill' Tacey – 14th. December 1994, Hampshire

'Lavengri': Vera Chapman – 15th. December 1994, Croydon

'Hawk': C. S. Dixon – 6th. September 1995, Horsham

'Fleetfoot': Ashley Lewis – 20th. September 1995, London

I was fortunate also to be in fairly regular contact with both Hargrave's widow, Diana Hargrave and Chris Judge Smith, who together run the Kibbo Kift Foundation.

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