

THE COUNTIES/AREAS

Brecon (Brecknock)

Originally the Scouts of Brecknock enjoyed a high profile, because Lord Glanusk lived in the county, and was not only the first County Commissioner but also the first Commissioner for Wales, being appointed to both positions in 1912. The first troop in the County was founded at Ystragynlais in the Swansea Valley before the end of 1908, making it one of the earliest troops in Wales. By the time that Lord Glanusk became County Commissioner there were at least eight other troops in Brecknock, making it one of the strongest Scout Counties in Wales.

Systematic records thereafter are thin until 1952, when the surviving sequence of gazettes begins, but from the early 1930s onwards some of the older troops were celebrating their jubilees, and in 1937, to mark the coronation of George VI, a beacon was lit on the summit of Pen-y-Fan and kept going for 'over an hour', which presumably meant carrying quite a lot of fuel Brecknock Scouts helped out regularly at the Royal Welsh show when that became established at Builth Wells. In 1966 a record attendance at the County Rally was proudly noted, and in 1969 the county had over 120 Senior Scouts, which was some 38% of that age-group in the whole of Wales. One of the reasons for this success was the great natural playground of the Brecon Beacons, and the County's function as host to the innumerable groups and units from all over Britain (and Europe) which came to make use of it. In 1965 the 1st Brecon also acquired the farmhouse at Llwyn Bedoe to use as a base for such expeditions. Welsh jamborees were held at Gwernyfed in 1961, and at Glanusk in 1993, both of which involved major local input. There were royal visits to the county in 1955 and 1981, when the Scouts did their bit as escorts and cheerleaders, and the Chief Scout came in 1972 and 1980.

The Grand Old Man of Brecknock Scouting was Sir Geoffrey Raikes. He became County Commissioner in 1944, and remained in post until 1963, when he became County President. Retiring at the age of 86 in 1972, he died aged 89 in 1975. Capt W.H.N. Legge Bourke, who was County Commissioner from 1979 to 1988, and is presently the President of the Welsh Scout Council, lives at Glanusk