

# The Origins of the Woodbadge Axe and Log



The origin of the axe and log symbol of Woodbadge is the camp emblem of Gilwell Park in England. A letter from Ken Stevens, former chief executive commissioner of the British Boy Scout Association discussed the subject with Don Potter, who was at Gilwell from the beginning as a staff.

It originated when Francis Gidney wanted a special 'logo' to denote Gilwell Park as opposed to Scout Headquarters. You will understand that Gilwell Park has always been the property of Scout Headquarters. Gidney wanted to be sure that, although the Park was a part of Headquarters, it was quite different and much more associated with the outdoors and woodcraft side of Scouting rather than the 'business' side. He therefore adopted the symbol for use on all leader training publications and letterheads.

Don reiterated that there was a great deal of practical activity during Leader courses run by Gidney and axes were as prominent as 'billy cans'. Great emphasis was placed on safety with tools and axes were always expected to be 'masked' by burying the blade in a log of wood. Hence there were examples of axes properly masked all over the Training Camp and they clearly struck Gidney as an ideal symbol to denote all that the training courses stood for!

Gidney was the first Camp Chief of Gilwell during the first Woodbadge course in 1919. He was known for his axe throwing exhibitions and training course in axemanship. Chief Gidney also invented the Gilwell scarf with the MacLaren Tartan.

*Source:*

[http://www.horseshoetrail.org/axe\\_log.html](http://www.horseshoetrail.org/axe_log.html)