

## Book Review

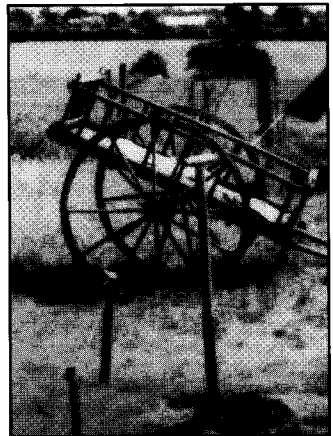
**Scouting for Banbury's Boys**, by Trevor Parry. 96pp. Robert Boyd Publications. (ISBN 978 1 899536 91 7), 2008. £9.95 + £2 p&p, available from the author, Boundary House, 1 Sycamore Drive, Banbury OX16 9HF.

A hundred years ago 'BP' was universally recognised, not as British Petroleum, but as Baden-Powell, the founder of scouting. Trevor Parry's book covers a hundred years. An iconic portrait of BP is its frontispiece.

Robert Baden-Powell, a senior officer in the hussars, came to fame during the Boer War through commanding the besieged garrison of Mafeking, which was relieved amid much public rejoicing. He had written a handbook of field-craft and mapping for soldiers. It had been taken up by the Boys' Brigade and by public schools as a basis for activities. So Baden-Powell published a new version and thus was born *Scouting for Boys*, reprinted ten times in two years. This, along with BP's camp for boys on Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour in 1907, was the launch pad for scouting. Mr Parry's book opens with a handy account of this early national history of scouting from the time when informal groups of boys formed their own patrols to the development of groups, districts and counties much as to-day.

The rest of the book chronicles scouting in Banbury and the surrounding villages over a hundred years. Trevor Parry is certainly qualified for the task. Banbury-born, with a career in accountancy and business, he has given a lifetime's service to scouting, from his joining 2nd Banbury (Methodist) Scouts in 1948, becoming a Queen's Scout in 1953, through fourteen years as District Commissioner, to a spell as Deputy County Commissioner for Oxfordshire, before returning to his roots in leadership of local troops.

Extracts from the *Banbury Advertiser*, and *Guardian* provide lively, imaginable accounts of early scouting activities. The first account, found in 1909, records 1st Banbury's visit to Chipping Norton for church parade after which they lit fires in a nearby field and cooked dinner – simple days. Norman Braggins was an early driving force in the town's scouting. We read of a 'trek cart' built by his timber firm which was widely sold nationally. It could be dismantled to provide ladders, and a table or stretcher. It featured in scout displays of camping, bridge building and river crossing.



*The Braggins Kit Cart*