



Bishopsgate  
Institute

## John Colbert: Woodcraft Folk Archive

(COLBERT)

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Susana Pedro  
July 2014

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**Name of Creator:**

Colbert, John (Gazelle) (1945-2012) member of the Woodcraft Folk

**Extent:**

13 boxes + 8 photographic albums

**Administrative/Biographical History:**

John Colbert was born in to a family of Woodcraft Folk members. His parents and other relatives were all part of the movement since the early days. John also met his wife Barbara during Woodcraft Folk activities.

The Woodcraft Folk has similar roots to the Scouts and derives from the Kindred of the Kibbo Kift, a movement created by an ex-Scout, John Hargrave, who had broken away from the Scouting movement shortly after the First World War because he considered it too militaristic. In 1925, Leslie Paul led some south London co-operative groups, who considered Hargrave's approach too authoritarian, in to forming the Woodcraft Folk.

Since its early days the Woodcraft Folk had a strong non-religious and anti-capitalist focus and recruited both adults and children regardless of their gender. Due to its connections to the Co-Operative Societies, labour and trade union movements until the 1960's most of Woodcraft Folk groups were based in working-class industrial areas in London, Coventry and Sheffield.

The Woodcraft Folk is a movement that aims to educated children following principles of equality, friendship, peace and co-operation and until the 1990's most of the learning process involved camping, hiking and other outdoor activities.

The movement is part of the International Falcon Movement – Socialist Education International, a federation of progressive youth organisations that advocates for children's' rights and education. The movement is also member of Co-operatives UK, Stop the War Coalition, it is affiliated to the National Peace Council, Campaign Against Arms Trade and works closely with local CND branches.

**Custodial History:**

Deposited at the Bishopsgate Institute by Barbara Colbert in July 2014.

**Scope and Content:**

Documents and memorabilia of John Colbert and the Woodcraft Folk, includes: Woodcraft Folk papers, including, subscription books, annual reports, educational and ceremonial guidelines and newsletters; scrapbooks, diaries, photographic albums and audio-visual records; published material by the Woodcraft Folk and other published material related to the USSR and co-operative women; memorabilia, including, badges, clothing and accessories.

**System of Arrangement:**

The papers of John Colbert: Woodcraft Folk are divided into the following eight sections:

- COLBERT/1: Woodcraft Folk Papers
- COLBERT/2: Woodcraft Folk Magazines and Newsletters
- COLBERT/3: Scrapbooks, diaries and information on expeditions and camps
- COLBERT/4: Woodcraft Folk Publications
- COLBERT/5: Photographs
- COLBERT/6: Books
- COLBERT/7: Memorabilia
- COLBERT/8: Audio-visuals

**Language/scripts of material:**

English

**Access conditions:**

OPEN

**Copying conditions:**

Photocopying, scanning and digital photography (without flash) is permitted for research purposes on completion of the Library's Copyright Declaration form and with respect to current UK copyright law.

**Finding Aids:**

Copy of handlist available in Library Reading Room.

**Rules and Conventions:**

Compiled in compliance with General International Standard Archival Description, ISAD(G), second edition, 2000; National Council on Archives Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names, 1997.

**COLBERT/1 Woodcraft Folk papers 1935-1990**

Includes:

- Subscription books (1935-1952)
- Papers regarding the Annual Delegates Conference (1987)
- Papers regarding offsite activities for the Village & Town Programme Committee International Camp (1988)

**OPEN**

**COLBERT/1/1 Subscription books 1935-1952**

Subscription books for the Lone Pine Fellowship (1935-1952) and the Tall Pine Fellowship. The books keep record of members' subscriptions under their folk names. Subscription book of 1952 for the Lone Pine Fellowship includes official names, addresses and dates of birth of some members.

**OPEN**

**COLBERT/1/2 List of candidates to the National Council 1987**

List of candidates to the Woodcraft Folk national council presented at the Annual Delegates Conference. (1987) (9pp)

**OPEN**

**COLBERT/1/3 International Camp offsite activities information sheet 1988**

Offsite activities information sheet for the International Camp 1988 at Weston Park. (6pp)

**OPEN**

**COLBERT/1/4 Annual Reports 1975-1986**

Includes:

- 'The Enchanter', poem by Leslie Paul in memoriam, Basil Rawson 1899-1976, National President of the Woodcraft Folk (c. 1976)
- Letter from Mervin Wilson, Member Relations Officer of Co-Operative Retail Services, to John Colbert, with enclosed copy of 'Following the trail on founding the Woodcraft Folk by the late Dr Leslie Paul' (9 March 1987)
- Photograph (b/w) of banner commemorating the Woodcraft Folk 60th Anniversary (1985)
- 'New Leaders Guide', published by the Woodcraft Folk (15pp) (1983)
- Copyright review sent to Finance and General Purpose Committee by Barbara Colbert, Education Secretary (19 November 1985)

- 'Lockerbrook : outdoor activities centre' (c. 1985)
  - Typescript, 'A brief resume of the last twenty years' activities of the W. F.' (7pp) (c. 1975)
  - Postcard, 'Span the World with Friendship' by Durham Woodcraft Folk and Peace Action Durham (c. 1985)
  - Newsletter, 'Woodcraft Focus' (6pp) (Summer 1986)
  - Booklet, 'We are of one blood : memories of the first 60 year of the Woodcraft Folk 1925-1985' (2 copies) (52pp) (1985), with enclosed letter from Mervin G. Wilson, Member Relations Officer of Co-Operative Retail Services, to John Colbert (c. 1985)
  - Woodcraft Folk reports (1973, 1975, 1977-1980-1986, 1989)
- OPEN**

<b>COLBERT/1/5</b>	<b>Camp Catering</b>	<b>n.d.</b>
	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Typescript, 'The Woodcraft Folk Leader's Manual : part two'</li> <li>- 'John and Babs' Menu and programme'</li> </ul> <p><b>OPEN</b></p>	
<b>COLBERT/1/6</b>	<b>Woodcraft Folk Ceremonies</b>	<b>1986-1990</b>
	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Woodcraft Folk Camp Cries (1986)</li> <li>- Ceremonies for the beginning and end of camp (1986)</li> <li>- 'A Farwell Ceremony for Edward Thomas Hawkes "Swift Canoe", 27 November 1913 to 26 March 1990'</li> </ul> <p><b>OPEN</b></p>	
<b>COLBERT/1/7</b>	<b>Miscellaneous papers</b>	<b>1940-1985</b>
	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Copy of 'The Golden Year : being the Jubilee History of the Watford Co-operative Society Ltd, 1895-1945', pp. 118-120, with slip written by Mervin G. Wilson, Member Relations Officer of CRS (n.d.)</li> <li>- Typescript, 'Woodcraft Folk : Stanharken Thing Constitution 1948'</li> <li>- Press cutting, 'Fifty years of the Woodcraft Folk' from unknown publication (c. 1975)</li> <li>- Letter from Henry Fair, Woodcraft Folk General Secretary, to other co-operative auxiliary attempting to gain their membership to the Woodcraft Folk (February 1951)</li> <li>- Handwritten notes for the weekend camp of June 24 (n.d.)</li> <li>- Newsletter, 'Our Circle and Children's Monthly' (2 copies) (October 1940)</li> <li>- Booklet, 'The Flame of Freedom' (27 April 1940)</li> </ul>	

- Booklet, 'World Youth Festival in Prague' (1948)
  - Booklet, draft of 'Wayfarer : an introductory guide to hiking and expeditions' (c. 1985)
- OPEN**

**COLBERT/2 Woodcraft Folk Magazines and Newsletters 1934-1944**

Includes issues of 'The Pioneer of the Folk', 'New Pioneer' and 'Helper'  
**OPEN**

**COLBERT/2/1 New Pioneer newsletter 1934-1939**

Includes:

- 'The Pioneer of the Folk', May 1934
- And the following 'New Pioneer' issues:
- September, October, November, December 1936
- January, February, March, April, May, July, October 1937
- August (2 copies), September, October, November (2 copies), December (2 copies) 1938
- February, March (2 copies), April/May, June (2 copies) 1939

**OPEN**

**COLBERT/2/2 Helper newsletter 1936-1944**

Includes 'Helper' issues from:

- December 1936
  - January 1937
  - March, August/September 1939
  - October/November 1942
  - December/January 1942
  - July/October, November, December 1944
  - October 1945
  - Compilation from April 1947 to May 1948
  - And 'The Helper London Section' vol.3 no.1 (1966)
- OPEN**



**COLBERT/3 Scrapbooks, diaries and information on expeditions and camps 1979-1985**

Papers, scrapbooks and photographs from excursions to the Malvern in Worcestershire, Viana do Castelo and Braga in Portugal and Llanfairfechan  
OPEN

**COLBERT/3/1 Camp information regarding an excursion to Llanfairfechan c. 1985**

Includes camp signs, illustrated routes, procedures and useful information, forms, leaflets, map  
OPEN

**COLBERT/3/2 International Camp at Three Countries Agricultural Society, Malvern, Worcestershire 1979**

1979 International Camp took place between 11 and 25 August in Malvern, This file includes mainly photographs of the camp and activities. Also includes leaflets related to the Camp and surroundings.  
OPEN

**COLBERT/3/3 Woodcraft Folk Visit to Portugal 1980**

Includes:

- Typescript with summary of WF experience in Viana do Castelo written by Barbara Colbert and appendixes with details of the participant Portuguese Co-operatives, data on recent Portuguese politics and a reference to Zeca Afonso's song 'Grandola'. (3 copies) (7pp)
- Letters regarding the WF visit to Portugal
- Press cuttings (2) regarding Portugal's first elected majority government since the end of the dictatorship in 1974
- File containing visitors' information about Portugal and a brief English/Portuguese glossary, with John Colbert's name embossed on the cover
- Notebook containing: letters between WF members and John and Barbara Colbert in preparation to their visit to Portugal; a diary of the visit with two postcards attached; a record of communications exchanged between WF and the Portuguese Co-Ops; information about the three different Portuguese Co-ops WF met in Portugal and details of some of their members; tables of accounts
- Collective Passport with Barbara and John Colbert as leaders of the party (in Portuguese)
- Map of Montedor and surrounding area, where they camped (in Portuguese)
- Map of the camp on the beach in Montedor

- Plan of activities (in Portuguese)
  - Photographs of the visit to Portugal organized day-by-day.
  - Scrapbook
- OPEN**

**COLBERT/4 Woodcraft Folk Publications 1931-1997**

Includes 'The Woodcraft Way' booklets, leaflets,  
miscellaneous booklets and songbooks

**OPEN**

**COLBERT/4/1 The Woodcraft Way 1976-1984**

Includes:

- 'The Woodcraft Way' books by Basil Rawson (2 copies) (n.d.)
- Booklets with tests for the different stages of being a Woodcraft Folk: Introduction, Keeness (2 versions), Greenstick, Pioneer (2 versions), Camper (2 copies), Health lore, Supple limb, Musician, Folk dancer (2 copies), Craftsman, First Aid (2 versions), Naturalist (2 copies), Festival, Wayfarer, Ecologist, Citizen, World citizen (2 versions), Peace

**OPEN**

**COLBERT/4/2 Leaflets and invitations 1965-1997**

Includes:

- Invitation, 'The Woodcraft Folk 40th Anniversary Dinner' (2 copies) [1965]
- Certificated presented to 'Phillip John (Baby) Colbert for his participation in the 1967 Venture & Helpers Festival'
- Leaflet, Brentwood, Leyton and East Ham Woodcraft Folk Spring Camp 1974 (2 copies)
- Invitation for the 21st anniversary folk dance (2 versions) (20 November 1982)
- Leaflet, Venturer Camp 1985
- Leaflet. 'The North East Woodcraft Folk 60th Anniversary Festival' (2 copies) (15 June 1985)
- Leaflet, 'International Youth Year 1985'
- Leaflet, 'Happy Birthday Henry!' (8 August 1997)

**OPEN**

**COLBERT/4/3 Booklets 1936-1986**

Includes:

- 'Handbook of Folk Law & Constitution' (1936) (B.1)
- 'Banned!' (c. 1946) (B.2)
- 'Eleven to Fifteens' by Basil Rawson (2 copies) (c. 1950) (B.3)
- 'Forty Years After' (2 copies) (16 October 1965) (B.4)
- 'Re-Statement of Policy and Recommendations' (October 1965) (B.5)
- 'The Early Days of the Woodcraft Folk by Leslie Paul', with attached note and photograph (1980) (B.6)
- 'Constitution' (2 versions) (1976; 1983) (B.7)
- 'New Leader's Guide' (2 copies) (1984) (B.8)

- 'Pioneer Leader's Guide' (c. 1985) (B.9)
  - 'Middlesbrough Elfins, Summer Camp -1986, Ravengill – Commondale' (B.10)
  - 'National Camp, Down Ampney, 25th July – 8th August, 1964' (B.11)
  - 'International Children's Camp 1967' (B.12)
  - 'A Short History of the Woodcraft Folk in Harrow, related by Jack Colbert (Silver Fox)' (2 copies) (B.13) (c. 1975)
  - 'Canvas Anthology 2' (1975) (B.14)
- OPEN**

**COLBERT/4/4 Songbooks**

**1931-1983**

Includes:

- 'The Hackney Scout Song Book', published by Hackney Local Association Boy Scouts (1947) (S.1)
- 'The Fellowship Songbook : melody edition' (1931) (S.2)
- 'Sing as we grow' published by Worker's Music Association (1946) (S.3)
- 'Songs for All Folk' (n.d.) (S.4)
- 'Songs for Venturers' (2 copies) (c. 1969) (S.5)
- 'Songs for Venturers' (c. 1975) (S.6)
- 'Songs for Venturers' (1983) (S.7)
- 'To Live a Long Life by Peggy Abrahamian : a celebration of the Woodcraft Folk 1925-1975' (2 copies) (S.8)
- 'The Woodcraft Folk Song Book' (2 copies) (c. 1935) (S.9)
- 'The Woodcraft Folk Song Sheet' (1936) (S.10)
- 'Songs for Co-operative Women' (c. 1935) (S.11)
- 'Songs for the Sixties' (1961) (S.12)

**OPEN**

COLBERT/5	<b>Photographs</b>	c.1930-1982
	Includes photographs and some press cuttings of the Woodcraft Folk activities and camps. OPEN	
COLBERT/5/1	<b>Photographs of Woodcraft Folk camps</b>	c.1940-c.1975
	Includes photographs of Woodcraft Folk camps and activities. (c.1940-c.1975) OPEN	
COLBERT/5/2	<b>Photographs and Newspaper cuttings</b>	1975-1981
	Includes: - Photographs of John and Barbara Colbert, Mike Broughton, and a Woodcraft Folk fair - Newspaper cuttings regarding the Woodcraft Folk (1975-1981) OPEN	
COLBERT/5/3	<b>Photographs of Colbert family and Woodcraft Folk Camps</b>	1932-1962
	Includes photographs of several members of the Colbert family in various camps. (1932-1962) OPEN	
COLBERT/5/4	<b>Photographic album of International Camp 1951</b>	1951
	Photographs of the International Camp in Bebden, August 1951. OPEN	
COLBERT/5/5	<b>Photographic album</b>	c.1955-c.1973
	Photographs of trips to Poland (?), Austria (?) and other locations. OPEN	
COLBERT/5/6	<b>Photographic album</b>	c.1936
	Photographs of Woodcraft Folk trips and camps. [Contains loose photographs] OPEN	
COLBERT/5/7	<b>Photographic album</b>	c.1930-c.1959
	Photographs of Woodcraft Folk camps. OPEN	

COLBERT/5/8	Photographic album	c.1946
	Photographs of Woodcraft Folk trips in the United Kingdom. (1946) OPEN	
COLBERT/5/9	Photographic album	1939
	Photographs of a play and Woodcraft Folk camps. (1939) OPEN	
COLBERT/5/10	Photographic album	1946
	Photographs of a play and Woodcraft Folk camp. (1946) OPEN	
COLBERT/5/11	Photographic album	c.1955
	Photographs of Woodcraft Folk activities in Poland (?). (c. 1955) OPEN	
COLBERT/5/13	Photographs of women wearing Woodcraft Folk costumes	c.1950
	Photograph of women wearing handmade and hand embroidered Woodcraft Folk costumes. (c. 1950) OPEN	

Includes:

- 'Peace within reach' by Fenner Brockway, published by Committee for European Security and Co-operation, London. (9 p.) (1973)
  - 'Playtime in Russia by various authors', edited by Hubert Griffith, published by Methuen & Co, London. (249 p.) (1935)
  - 'Merrie England' by Robert Blatchford, published by Clarion, London. (206 p.) (1895)
  - 'Life as we have known it' by Co-operative women, published by Virago, London. (194 p.) (1977)
  - 'USSR : questions and answers' edited and published by Novosti Press, Moscow. (509 p.) (1967?)
- OPEN**

<b>COLBERT/7</b>	<b>Memorabilia</b>	<b>1928- c.1985</b>
	Woodcraft Folk memorabilia: postcards, bunting flags, badges and medals, and clothing. <b>OPEN</b>	
<b>COLBERT/7/1</b>	<b>Postcards</b>	<b>1961-1965</b>
	Posted and not posted postcards from Zeltlager der Sozialistische Jugend – Die Falken [Socialist Youth Camp – The Flacons], Moscow, Leningrad [St. Petersburg], Berlin, Cornwall and other locations. (1961-1965) <b>OPEN</b>	
<b>COLBERT/7/2</b>	<b>Bunting flags</b>	<b>c.1940 – c.1985</b>
	Bunting flags of the 'Red Falcons' and 'Woodcraft Folk' in cotton and synthetic materials. (c. 1940 – c. 1985) <b>OPEN</b>	
<b>COLBERT/7/3</b>	<b>Clothing and accessories</b>	<b>c.1950 - 1975</b>
	Includes: - Handmade woman's cropped shirt in green cotton with two fabric covered buttons for three buttonholes and four fabric badges sewn. - Handmade woman's knee high skirt in green cotton with flower embroidery and elasticated waste. It was meant to be worn with shirt referred above as shown on photograph COLBERT/5/13. - Man's shirt in denim green cotton with six fabric badges sewn. - Handmade leather belt. <b>OPEN</b>	
<b>COLBERT/7/4</b>	<b>Sew-in Badges</b>	<b>1958-1967</b>
	Sew-in badges from various locations in France, United Kingdom, Germany and cooperative societies like the Red Falcons. (1958-1967) <b>OPEN</b>	
<b>COLBERT/7/5</b>	<b>Badges, Medals and Numismatic</b>	<b>1928-c.1980</b>
	Includes badges, medals and numismatic from: - Woodcraft Folk (1970) (7 items) - Red Falcons (1951-1958) (5 items) - Great Britain (c.1961 – c.1979) (4 items) - France (1975) (2 items) - Portugal (1977) (1 item) - Germany (1954-1958) (14 items)	



- Switzerland (1928) (1 item)
- Poland (1955) (12 items)
- Hungary (c. 1955) (1 item)
- Bulgaria (c. 1955) (1 item)
- Sweden (c. 1948) (1 item)
- Czechoslovakia (1958) (10 items)
- Soviet Union (1952-1960) (9 items)
- Australia (c. 1980) (7 items)
- Miscellaneous (n.d.) (4 items)

**OPEN**

COLBERT/8	Audio-visuals	1951-1982
	Films and audio recordings of the Woodcraft Folk. OPEN	
COLBERT/8/1	Audio cassette 'Children of Woodcraft'	n.d.
	Audio cassette, 'Children of Woodcraft : Span the World with Friendship' (n.d.) OPEN	
COLBERT/8/2	Video 'Co-op History Workshop : Tapes 1-9'	n.d.
	VHS cassette 'Co-op History Workshop : Tapes 1-9' with video recordings of Jack Colbert, Teddy Hawkes, Leslie Paul and Henry Fair OPEN	
COLBERT/8/3	Video 'Rumania'	n.d.
	8mm film reel of visit to Romania [?] OPEN	
COLBERT/8/4	Video 'Lockerbrook'	n.d.
	8mm reel film at Outdoor Activities Centre in the Peak District by Barbara Colbert OPEN	
COLBERT/8/5	Video 'International Camp Debden 1951'	1951
	9.5 mm film reel 'International Camp Debden 1951' OPEN	
COLBERT/8/6	Video 'Summer Camp 1978'	1978
	8mm film reel 'Summer Camp 1978' in Luton by Barbara Colbert OPEN	
COLBERT/8/7	Video 'International Camp Malvern 1979'	1979
	Includes: - 8mm film reel of International Camp in Malvern in 1979 by Barbara Colbert - Leaflet, 'International Camp, 11-25th August, Three Countries Agricultural Society, Malvern Worcestershire' OPEN	

COLBERT/8/8	Video '1980 Portugal Woodcraft Folk'	1980
	8mm film reel of first Woodcraft Folk delegation to Portugal in 1980 by Barbara Colbert OPEN	
COLBERT/8/9	Video 'Kinder Trespass 1982'	1982
	Includes: - 8mm film reel 'Kinder Trespass 1982' by Barbara Colbert - Leaflet, 'Kinder Trespass : 50th Anniversary Programme' OPEN	
COLBERT/8/10	Video 'Following the Trail'	c.1985
	Includes: - VHS cassette 'Following the Trail' - Leaflet, 'The Trail : Woodcraft Folk : Leslie Paul' OPEN	
COLBERT/8/11	Video with unknown content	n.d.
	8mm film reel with unknown content OPEN	