



The History of Baden-Powell



Robert Stephenson Smyth Powell was born on 22nd February 1857. Sadly, when he was only 3 years old his father died and his mother decided to add the name Baden to the family name as a tribute to her husband the Reverend Baden Powell. So he became known as Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell, a name which is now very famous indeed.



BP as he was later known, liked nothing more than playing outside. He would go on adventures with his brothers and they would camp outside cooking for themselves on open fires. He really enjoyed tracking animals and would often creep around silently getting as close as possible, to watch them. Once he and his brothers went on a yachting trip around the south coast of England. Another time they traced the River Thames to its source by canoe.

At the age of 12 he received a scholarship to Chaterhouse School, one of England's famous Public Schools. The school was then located in London but it soon moved to Godalming in Surrey. There were some woods just outside the school that were out of bounds for pupils. It was here that BP played, he would stalk his teachers, and if he got hungry he would catch rabbits and cook them by fire, being very careful not to let the fire make any smoke in case his teachers saw it. Little did he know at the time but whilst he was playing the seeds of Scouting were beginning to grow.

Choosing a military career BP served in campaigns in India, Afghanistan, Malta and South Africa. Whilst in Africa BP wrote "Aids to scouting", a manual designed to train soldiers to become army scouts able to track enemies and survive in the wild, by catching their own food and building shelters. He became world famous during the Boer war for the defence of Mafeking, a small town in South Africa. With 800 men he was besieged by a force of 9,000 Boer soldiers. His small force held out against these immense odds for 217 days, until a relief column of British soldiers arrived.

At Mafeking BP organised the "Mafeking Cadets". They were trained in efficiency, obedience and smartness they performed many tasks, relieving soldiers for active defence of the town. The Cadets first took messages by donkey, but as the food in the town ran out, (they were under siege for 217 days!), the donkeys ended up in the kitchen! So instead the boys used bicycles, and often had to deliver messages under heavy fire. In one famous story, BP warned one of the boys that he could get hit and he replied, "I pedal so quick sir, that they'll never catch me!"

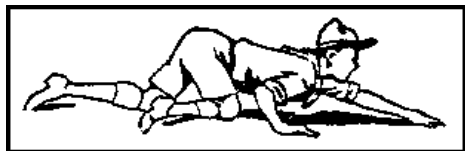


Once back in Britain BP found that some of the books he had written in South Africa to help the Army were being used and followed by boys. Seeing this possible use of his ideas, he revised his notes and rewrote them aimed at boys rather than men. In 1907 he decided to hold an experimental camp on Brownsea Island, to try out his ideas. He brought together 22 boys from different walks of life, he hoped the camp would help him find out if his ideas for his new book would work or not.

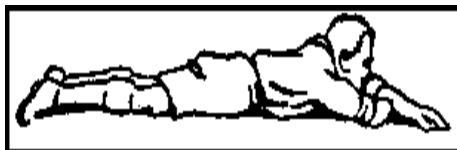
The boys were divided into four patrols, Curlews, Ravens, Wolves and Bulls. They learnt about camping, hiking, life-saving, boating and many more of the activities that Scouts today still do, you will get a chance to try some of these whilst you are in the Cub Pack.

The camp was a great success, it proved that boys could be trusted to organise themselves and that when put “on their honour” (sound familiar? It should! It’s still used in the Scout Promise today) they would do their best.

One of the lessons they learnt at Brownsea Island



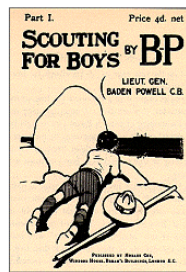
The wrong way to stalk



The correct way to stalk

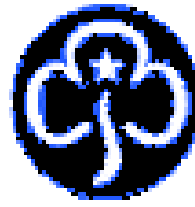
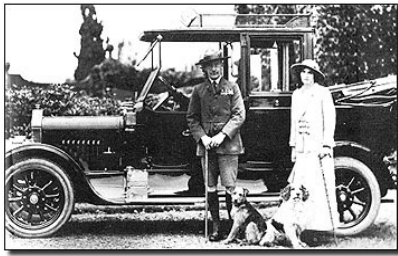


BP and “Scouts” at Brownsea



On return from this first camp, BP published his Scouting for Boys, which was published in six parts starting in January 1908. By the end of 1908 this book was translated into five other languages. The sketches in the book were all done by BP, most of them based on his own exciting career. This became really popular and all over the country boys began forming themselves into patrols. After publishing more notes for adult leaders, the patrols joined together to form Troops and Scouts as we know it began.

In 1909 an invitation was sent out to all Scouts to meet for a rally at Crystal Palace, this resulted in a parade at which over 11,000 Scouts made their appearance; the biggest number of boys that had ever taken place so far and the movement was not yet two years old!



To everyone surprise some girls came to Crystal Palace, they had been reading the Scouting stories. They had registered themselves as Scouts at headquarters and had obtained the uniforms by using only their initials and not their first names. They demanded to be allowed to join the organisation. BP not being married asked his sister Agnes to help him organise a new movement, which he called Girl Guides after a famous Indian regiment.

In January 1912 BP set of to promote Scouting in the USA, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. It was whilst travelling that he met Olave Soames on a ship bound for Jamaica. Olave and BP found they had much in common, including there birthdays, although born 32 years apart. By the time the ship reached Jamaica they were unofficially engaged and were married later that year, on October 22nd.

It was not long before the younger brothers of the Scouts began to ask to join in the fun of Scouting. In 1916, Baden Powell started a special section called the Wolf Cubs for boys aged between 8 and 11 years. They learned all sorts of useful things like first-aid, tracking, how to keep themselves fit and healthy and how to light fires and cook meals.

Scouting grew and grew and later in 1920 the International Conference of Scouting was formed at the World Jamboree. BP was acclaimed Chief Scout of the World, the only person ever to hold that title.

BP devoted the rest of his life to Scouting and the promotion of the World brotherhood. In 1929 at the "Coming of Age" Jamboree, King George V made the founder a Baron. BP became Lord Baden-Powell of Gilwell, he took this title from Gilwell Park, the International Training Centre for Scouters, located in Epping Forest, just outside London.

Lord and Lady Baden-Powell did a great deal of travelling through the following years, often taking there three children Peter, Heather and Betty with them. They visited Scouts and Guides everywhere, inspiring everyone who met them with their energy and enthusiasm.

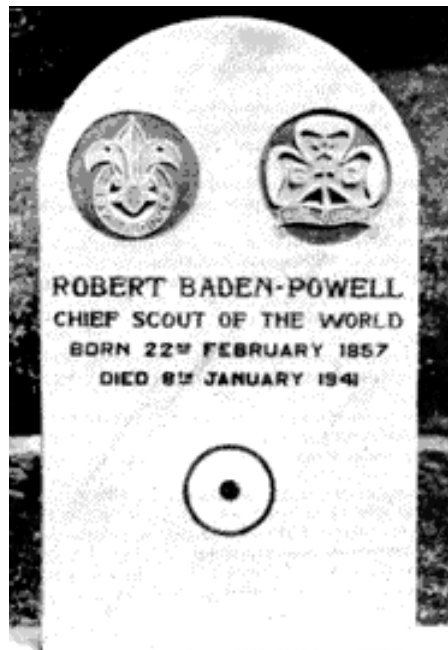
In 1937 BP now an old man and in failing health, bade farewell to his beloved Scouts at a Jamboree in Holland. To go and spend his last few years in the warm climate and sunshine of his beloved Kenya.

BP's parting words at the Jamboree were,

“Now the time has come for me to say good-bye. I want you to lead happy lives. You know that many of us will never meet again in this world. I am now in my eighty-first year and am nearing the end of my life. Most of you are at the beginning and I want your lives to be happy and successful. You can make them so by doing your best to carry out the Scout Law all your days, whatever your station and wherever you are. I want you all to preserve this badge of the Jamboree which is on your uniform. I suggest you keep it and treasure it and try to remember what it stands for. It will be a reminder of the happy times you have had in camp; it will remind you to take the ten points of our Scout Law as your guide in life; and it will remind you of the many friends to whom you have held out the hand of friendship and so helped through goodwill to bring about God's reign of peace among men.
Now good-bye, God bless you all”.

Sadly BP died on the 8th January 1941. His grave in Kenya bears a simple inscription: “Robert Baden-Powell, Chief Scout of the World” with the Scout and Guide emblems and the familiar woodcraft symbol “I have gone home”. He was honoured by many countries with medals, titles and decorations, but his greatest tribute will always be the millions of boys and girls who have found happiness in the organisation he founded.

**NOW HAVE A GO AT ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE
WHEN YOU HAVE DONE THEM TAKE THEM BACK TO YOUR LEADER**



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Cubs Name _____

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When was BP born?

What did he and his brothers do by canoe?

When he was 12 he went to which Public School?

Where did he serve with the military?

What were BP's first Cadets called?

In 1907 BP held an experimental camp, where was it?

The boys at this camp were split into four patrols, what were there names?

Who did BP marry?

How many children did BP have?

What woodcraft symbol does BP have on his grave stone?

If you could meet BP today what would you say to him?

