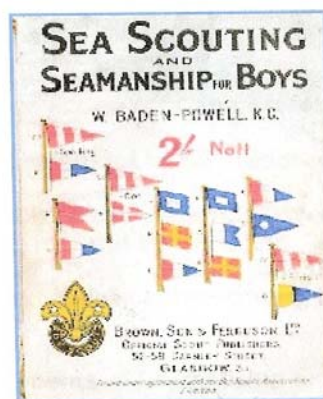


THE CENTENARY OF SEA SCOUTING



One hundred years ago 7 – 21 August 1909, a camp was held at Beaulieu Hampshire UK, to train Scouts who wished to take part in activities on the water. Following a competition in *The Scout* weekly magazine, fifty boys were selected to stay on board the training ship *Mercury* moored on the River Hamble while another fifty slept on shore at Bucklers Hard by kind permission of **Lord Montagu**. The camp lasted a fortnight and after a week the boys swapped accommodation. *Mercury* was operated by the famous cricketer and athlete **C.B.Fry** who knew **Major General Robert Baden-Powell**, the Chief Scout. Two boys, **Rudyard Kipling's** son **John** and **Donald Baden-Powell**, the Chief Scout's nephew had both attended previous camps as had **Percy Everett** the County Commissioner of Hertfordshire who brought his son **Varley** and competition winners who were members of the First Elstree Troop of which Percy was also Scoutmaster.

It is from this date that Sea Scouting is considered to have started and in 1912 the Chief Scout asked his elder brother **Warrington Baden-Powell** (1847-1921) to write a book, *Sea Scouting and Seamanship for Boys*. This became the first official Handbook detailing the additional skills required by "Land Scouts" if they wished to become members of the Sea Scout branch, wearing the distinctive uniform but members of the same Movement. The St Andrews Scout HQ was hung with the International Code Signal Flags spelling out "Be Prepared". The Scout motto. The same signal flags are shown on the front cover of the Handbook mentioned above. **Robert Baden-Powell** later wrote in a subsequent foreword "This book, by helping more boys in their turn to become handy-men for their country will stand as a fitting memorial to the life and character of its author".



Warrington Baden-Powell was a respected lawyer and KC specialising in Maritime Law. It was his love of sailing and the influence he had over his younger brothers that prompted him to start Sea Scouting. As an executive member of the Royal Canoe Club and a former cadet on board HMS *Conway*, serving part of his Merchant training with P&O, **Warrington** was well qualified to lead this new Section. In 1913 he married **Hilda Farmer** a lady from the One Tree Hill area of Auckland, New Zealand whose family lived at the Brownhills estate in St Andrews, Scotland. **Warrington** died in 1921 and his ashes were interred at the family plot at St Andrews Cemetery.



Royal Navy Reserve, c.1908
From the Lafayette Negative Collection
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To mark the World Centenary of Sea Scouting in the United Kingdom, a Church service and wreath-laying ceremony were held at St Andrews on Sunday 16 August 2009. The events started with Scouts arriving at the Eighth Fife (St. Andrews) Scout Group HQ from New Zealand, USA, Dublin in the Irish Republic and England and a general briefing was held there on the Saturday. (The NZ contingent were from the top New Lynn Scout Group who were the winners of the national Jellico Trident Trophy which was presented to the Scout Association in 1924 by Admiral of the Fleet,



Viscount Jellico of Scapa; it is the premier award for Sea Scout Groups in New Zealand and is contested only at National Regattas). The NZ contingent was led by **Peter McGowan**

On Sunday morning over 100 Scouts, the international contingents and VIPs assembled at the Parish Church of The Holy Trinity and joined the regular congregation for the service to mark the Centenary. An

international colour party laid the flags at the altar.

The Rev. Cameron Harrison, who used a suitable nautical theme for his address led the Service. Scouts from New Zealand, St Andrews and Ireland read three readings illustrating how boats were part of Jesus' ministry.

Roy Masini, who specialises in the recording of Sea Scout history, gave a talk that focused our minds on the celebration. He stated that **Robert Baden-Powell** wrote *Scouting for Boys* in 1908; letters written by boys asking how they could become Scouts, had flooded into the London Office. Amongst the huge correspondence was a one from some boys at the coast who asked how they could become Scouts in boats. Fortunately, this letter was passed to **Percy Everett**, who worked for **Arthur Pearson**, the publisher of *Scouting for Boys* and *The Scout*. **B-P** discussed this letter with his brother **Warington B-P** and others on how this could be done and a scheme for Scouts on water was devised, the first activity taking place on the training ship *Mercury*. **Hilda Baden-Powell** always took a close interest in Sea Scouting until her death in the 1950s.

As the participants left the church and made their way to the Eighth Fife Scout HQ for a buffet lunch, a four-masted Dutch sailing ship taking part in the St Andrews Harbour Gala Day came into view at anchor in the Bay, making a most appropriate picture on this particular day. At lunch



announcements were made by the **Lord Lieutenant of Fife, Margaret Dean**, who presented a Queen's Scout Award to **Thomas Edward Astell-Burt** of the First St Andrews (Acorn) Scout Group;

by **Lieutenant Commander David Griffiths**, RN Staff Officer Scouts representing Flag Officer Scotland, who presented a Chief Scout's Award (NZ) to **Hamish Thorpe** a member of the New Zealand contingent; **Derek Colley**, Regional Commissioner for East Scotland Region, who presented **Callum Sinclair** from St Andrews with his Chief Scouts Award and by the organisers of the event, District Commissioner for North East Fife Scouts **Jean Martin** and a member of the New Zealand contingent **Ron Bird**.



The Hon. Michael Baden Powell, grandson of The Founder and resident of Australia, made a specially recorded DVD for the ceremony in which he mentioned that B-P had been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 1939, but that no awards were made during WW II. **Michael Baden-Powell** emphasised the international aspects of Scouting and its aim to bring about harmony between nations.



In the afternoon the event relocated to assemble at the graveside of **Warrington Baden-Powell**. A minutes silence was held, marked by two young Sea Scouts from Limekilns sounding "the still" and "carry on" on bosuns` pipes.

Wreaths were laid by **Susie Clements** and **Eleanor Linton** of the Eighth Fife Scout Group, **Brendon McRae** and **Hamish Thorpe** from New Zealand and **Eleanor Lyall**, Chief Commissioner for Scotland.

The **Rev. Cameron Harrison** and **Ron Bird** spoke appropriate words.

Other VIPs attending were **Sir Menzies Campbell MP** for North East Fife who was a former member of the First Glasgow Scout Troop (who claim to be the first Scout Troop in the world), **Frances Melville** Provost for Fife, **Derek Colley** Regional Scout Commissioner for East Scotland, **Jean Martin**, District Scout Commissioner for North East Fife, **Andy Matthew**, former Scouts` Chief Commissioner for Scotland, **Lieutenant Commander David Griffiths RN**, **Roy Masini** Scout Historian and **Frank Brittain**, History & Heritage Team, Hertfordshire Scouts.

Following the wreath laying and the singing of a traditional Maori song about meeting together and understanding, by members of the New Zealand contingent, the party returned to the Eighth Fife Scout HQ for tea.

Many friendships were cemented acknowledging the fellowship of this unique International Scouting occasion. This is the Irish contingent with Provost Frances Melville. Thanks were made to the organisers for a smoothly run event. Funding was made possible from Scout HQ by **Stephen Peck**, Director of Programme and Development



who is located at Gilwell Park, Chingford, London E4 7QW.

There are currently around 400 Sea Scout Troops in the United Kingdom of which 101 hold Royal Navy Recognition. There are Sea Scout Troops in many other countries following the original ideals set down by **Warrington Baden-Powell**.

The National Sea Scout Jamboree celebrating the centenary of Sea Scouting in the United Kingdom was held at Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham from 1-8 August. This was also an international event, offering first class facilities for water activities at the *National Water Sports Centre* and was attended by over 2000 Scouts. Other countries will celebrate the centenary in 2010 to coincide with the starting of their own Sea Scout Troops.



A book written by **Roy Masini** *A History of Sea Scouting 1909 – 2009*, is due to be published in the near future. r.masini2@ukonline.co.uk

FRANK BRITAIN archivist@hertfordshirescouts.org.uk 0845 643 6973