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OUR FOUNDER

by
E. E. REYNOLDS

Illustrated with some of B.-P.'s original sketches

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Editor's Note:

The reader is reminded that these texts have been written a long time ago. Consequently, they may use some terms or express sentiments which were current at the time, regardless of what we may think of them at the beginning of the 21st century. For reasons of historical accuracy they have been preserved in their original form.

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OUR FOUNDER

B-P. once said, "I am a Cockney born and bred, and I caught my first tiddler and learnt to swim in the Serpentine." The Serpentine is the big lake in Hyde Park, and it was in a house in a street off the north side of the Park that Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell – to give his full name – was born on 22nd February, 1857.

The surname Baden-Powell combines the names of two families – the Powells of East Anglia, where they had been settled for centuries, and the Badens, another old family of Wiltshire. B.-P.'s father was a clergyman and an Oxford professor; he was a scientist and a keen naturalist. He was born in 1796 when the young Napoleon was invading Italy; his son Robert died in 1941 the year in which Hitler invaded Russia.

Mrs. Baden-Powell was the daughter of Admiral William Smyth, one of the founders of the Royal Geographical Society. He was a descendant from the family of which Captain John Smith, one of the colonizers of Virginia, was a member.

Professor Baden-Powell died when B.-P. was three years old. He then had four brothers older than himself (one of them died three years later) and one younger brother. The eldest, Warrington, was then thirteen years old. There was also a younger sister.

Mrs. Baden-Powell had to bring up her children carefully because they were not too well-off, but she allowed them a lot of freedom in finding their own amusements. They were encouraged to learn all they could about animals and plants and birds. B.-P. was a very lively member of a very lively family, each of whom had special gifts; he early showed his skill in drawing and found that he could use either hand equally well, and one of his ways of amusing others was by imitating the calls of birds and animals.

Schooldays.

For a time he went to the Rose Hill School, Tunbridge Wells; this gave him more opportunity of getting to know life in the fields and woods.

In 1869 he won a scholarship to Charterhouse School which was then in London. He was fond of telling a story about his early days there; he called it his first lesson in tactics. There was an age-long feud between the butcher boys of Smithfield and the boys of the school and many a pitched battle was fought. During one of these, the butcher boys had climbed the school wall and were throwing stones at the defenders in the playground. A group of smaller boys, including B.-P., stood watching for a chance to help the bigger ones. While they stood there they were joined by the headmaster, Dr. Haig Brown. They thought at first he was going to scold them, but to their surprise he said, "If you boys go out by that side-door, you can attack them in the flank."

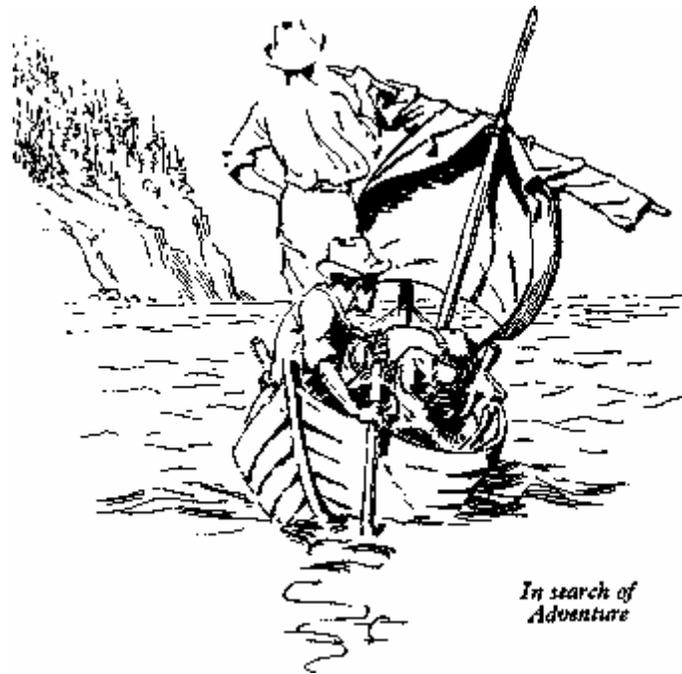
"The door is locked, sir!" said one of them.

The doctor put his hand into his pocket and brought out the key. So the flanking movement was carried out and the attackers routed.

The school was moved from London to Godalming in Surrey, and during this difficult time, B.-P. proved most helpful.

He was not an outstanding scholar or athlete, but took his share in all activities with gusto; the war-whoop he would let out when goalkeeping was only one sign of his high spirits. He had his little peculiarities too; he would take two pair of boots on to the football field so that he could change at half-time and be more comfortable. He was a clever mimic and could set the audience roaring with laughter at his witty performances. With a few others he organised a kind of secret club in which he was known as Lord Bathing-Towel.

You must picture him as a slightly-built boy with sandy hair and freckles, but though he might look small he had a tough and wiry constitution as he was to prove in later years of adventure and hardship.



There was one side of life at school that proved of great importance in his training. A stretch of woodland called “The Copse” was out of bounds to the boys. This was a natural invitation to anyone of daring spirit B.-P. would steal off there and snare rabbits which he cooked over a smokeless fire—he did not want to advertise his presence! He learned the use of a knife and axe, and how to move quietly through the undergrowth. Animals always attracted him, and he discovered that if he kept quite still, or “froze”, he could watch them and learn about their habits. This was the scout in the making.

When B.-P. was eleven years old, his eldest brother, Warington, was twenty-one; then came George aged twenty, and Francis aged eighteen. Warington was very keen on sailing (he was later to help the beginning of Sea Scouting), and had been trained on the *Conway*. None of them had much money so they had to get old boats and put them into proper order; then the four brothers set off during the holidays in search of adventure. As he was the youngest, B.-P. got most of the odd jobs such as washing-up and cooking. Once he concocted what he thought was a wonderful pea soup. The result was so horrible that he was made to eat the lot himself. “I never made that mistake again,” he said in after years.

The brothers cruised round the coasts of Great Britain and even across to Norway. They had some experiences that all but led to disaster. Thus on one occasion they were off Torquay in a 10-tonner which they had christened the *Koh-i-noor* when a gale sprang up from the south-west. They tried to make Dartmouth, but found it impossible, so they ran before the gale for Weymouth. The storm grew fiercer. Each had a length of rope tied to his waist with the free end lashed to the mast just giving enough slack for them to move about their tasks. B.-P. admitted that he was thoroughly scared, and it was only Warington’s strict discipline that brought them through. All night long they battled with the wind and the waves, and it was not until the next day that they found refuge under the lee of Portland Bill.

They also had tramping holidays. All gear was back-packed; they slept out in barns or under trees. They got to know all about what we now call hiking; how to use maps; how to cook their own meals, and how to take care of themselves. They were all keen on sketching so that castles and other old buildings attracted them. Another interest they shared was learning how things were made; they got permission to visit factories and see the making of paper, or pottery,

or furniture. In this way they gained a lot of varied information, some of which was useful in later years in strange circumstances.

Another trip was by canoe up the Thames and the Avon to the Severn and up the Wye into Wales; they portaged their canoe and gear where necessary.

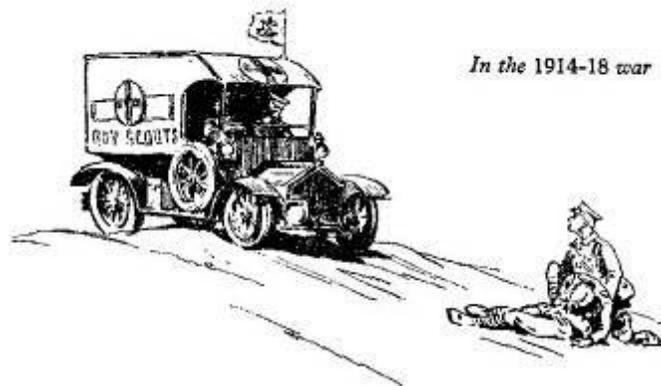
At the age of nineteen, B.-P. was uncertain what he wanted to be; he had a vague idea that he would like to travel, and throughout his long life that desire never grew less. His mother thought he should go to Oxford as two of his brothers had done, and it was almost an accident that took him into the army. At the end of his school career, he sat for an Army examination which he saw advertised. To his surprise, and apparently to that of everyone who knew him, he passed so high up on the list that he was excused the usual Sandhurst course and was gazetted to the 13th Hussars, then stationed in India. So his longing for travel was quickly satisfied, and in the September of 1876 he sailed for Bombay.

India.

B.-P. spent ten years in India; the first eight were as an officer in the Hussars, and the last two as Colonel of the 5th Dragoon Guards. The country therefore meant a great deal to him; it was there that he learnt the elements of practical scouting as a soldier, and later that he tried out those methods of training young soldiers as scouts which were the foundation of Scouting for Boys.

Probably the thing which struck his fellow-officers most was his high spirits and his quick sense of fun. His first batman said, "He was a general favourite, and he brightened up the life of the regiment considerably." The sergeant who taught him riding recalled that, "On parade, he was *on* parade, but off parade he was up to all kinds of devilment."

He was soon taking his share in theatricals and concerts for he could sing a comic song, act a part in an opera or play, paint scenery and also organise a show at short notice. In sport he quickly took to polo and pig-sticking; he loved horses and was a fine rider. In pig-sticking there was the additional thrill of the danger and the need for being able to read tracks and know the habits of the animal. In 1883 he won the Kadir Cup for pig-sticking – the most coveted of trophies for that sport. The horses he used were trained by himself; he had to live carefully as officers were not paid much in those days, but by buying untrained horses in out-of-the-way villages, he was able to get the mounts he needed and then to sell the trained horses to better-off officers. To keep down his expenses he gave up smoking and limited his mess bills. He used his skill in sketching and writing to add to his income. In these ways he was able to manage without asking his mother for additional funds; he knew she had little to spare.



He was a great favourite with the officers' children; in the evenings he would take them out for a walk and teach them how to use their eyes; as they went along he would play catchy tunes on his ocarina, or invent games for them to play. On wet days they knew they could go along to his bungalow and watch him drawing and painting, or have some good fun with him as leader.

There were other times when he liked to get away from everyone; he would go off into the wilder country to learn more about beasts and birds, or to make water-colour sketches. His regular letters home to his mother were always illustrated with thumb-nail drawings and caricatures.

All the time he was working hard at soldiering, and his promotions show how efficient he became; lieutenant in 1878, adjutant and captain in 1883. He particularly excelled in reconnaissance, surveying and scouting. One example may be given of his skill. At some manoeuvres part of the regiment was protecting the cantonment from the rest who acted as the "enemy". B.-P. was one of the attackers; they first tried to find out by scouting exactly where the defenders were placed, but without any success. At night-fall they decided they might as well give up, but B.-P. was determined to get the information. So by himself he set off in the dusk and by careful scouting learned all he could of the defenders' positions. At the farthest point he left a glove under a bush. When the General discussed the exercise with the officers, the defenders were very surprised to hear B.-P. describe exactly how their men had been posted; at first they thought it was just a good guess, but when they found his glove where he said he had put it, they had to admit his success.

Natal.

In 1884 the regiment left India for home, but orders were received that they were to disembark at Port Natal as trouble was threatening in South Africa. The Colonel gave B.-P. a special job; it was to survey the best route over the Drakensberg Mountains which would have to be crossed if the regiment was called into active service. B.-P. disguised himself as a journalist and in the course of a 600 mile ride he got all the needed information and drew a map of the possible routes. Things quietened down and the regiment was ordered to continue its homeward journey.

For two years B.-P. was stationed in England with his regiment; he found routine army life rather dull so he got permission to do some secret service work in Russia and Germany. His closest shave was in Russia. He had as his companion his younger brother who was also a soldier. They set out to get details of a new kind of searchlight and of an observation balloon. They learned all they wanted, but were arrested before they could get away; had they been brought to trial, they would have been imprisoned but they managed to trick their guards and to get on board an English ship.

B.-P.'s uncle, General Sir Henry Smyth, was appointed G.O.C. at the Cape in 1887, and he took his nephew with him as A.D.C. Official life at Cape Town had few excitements; formal receptions and drawing-room teas were not to B.-P.'s taste and he got bored. Then trouble broke out with the Zulus. B.-P.'s first job was to rescue some officials and their families up country. On his way back he had an early experience of the value of knowing something about first aid; he was able to help a wounded native girl. Later he took part in the rounding-up of the Zulu chief, Dinizulu, and it was then that he came into possession of a necklace of wooden beads that, many years later, he handed over to Gilwell Park as the design for the Wood Badge. It was also at this time that he heard a Zulu Impi chanting the Een-gonyama chorus; that too was to have a future use in Scouting.

The Zulus called him "M'hlala Panzi", which means "the man who lies down to shoot"; this was their way of saying that he took careful aim or thought before doing anything.

Malta.

Sir Henry Smyth was next appointed to Malta as Commander-in-Chief and he took his nephew with him again. Here also the dull day-by-day official business offered little that was exciting, so, this time, B.-P. went off on occasional expeditions as Intelligence Officer for the Mediterranean. His work was done mostly in the Balkans and Turkey. On one trip he posed as a butterfly collector. Some officers he met were a little suspicious; they examined his note-book,

but as it contained careful drawings of butterflies, they shrugged their shoulders and let him go. They did not realise that the butterflies were of no known species, and that the patches of colour and the fine lines on the wings were in fact maps showing the positions of guns.

B.-P. returned to his regiment in Ireland in 1893 and for two years lived the regular life of an army officer; he was popular with his men and they were sorry when he was called away for special duties. The Commander-in-Chief, Lord Wolseley, had noted that this young Major (he was only 36 when he went to Ireland) was resourceful and had initiative, so when a war began in Ashanti and an energetic officer was needed, B.-P. was chosen for the unusual job.

Ashanti.

The capital of Ashanti, Kumassi, was 150 miles from the coast of West Africa (the southern part of the bulge), and the route lay through swamps and jungle. A native levy was raised to pioneer the road for the troops and B.-P. was put in command of it. This meant the clearing of trees, the building of bridges, and the construction of huts; by the end of the expedition there was not much that he didn't know about bridge-building and hut-making. There was no fighting as King Prempeh (who many years later became President of the Ashanti Boy Scouts) realised that his position was hopeless; an end was put to the human sacrificing and the slave-trade that had been carried on.

Two things connect this expedition with Scouting. It was in Ashanti that B.-P. first regularly wore the famous cow-boy hat; because of this the natives called him "Kantankye", which means, "He of the big hat". The second link is the Scout staff B.-P. noticed that the Chief Engineer always carried a long staff marked in feet and inches. He explained how useful it was in leaping across streams, sounding the bed of a swamp, or making rough measurements when putting up the field telegraph. That fact B.-P. stored away in his mind for future use.

His knowledge of the natives also taught him an African saying, "Softlee, softlee, catchee monkey", in other words, "Don't go bull-headed for a thing; take it quietly". He was fond of quoting that saying when people wanted to rush things without thinking. He probably noticed also that the left-handshake was a sign of friendship,

B.-P. returned to England with increased reputation and gained a promotion. He was soon called upon for another special duty, for what he afterwards called "the best adventure of my life".

Matabeleland.

In 1896 a rebellion broke out in Matabeleland, or Rhodesia as we now call it. B.-P. was appointed Chief of Staff to the commander of the British forces.

No country called for greater skill in scouting than Matabeleland. The natives did not fight in armies in pitched battles, but took refuge in the wild, boulder-strewn mountains where they knew every inch of the ground. They were expert scouts themselves. This called out B.-P.'s finest skill. His work was heavy for as Chief of Staff he had to draw up all instructions for carrying out the campaign. Most of his scouting was carried out at night. At first he used to go out with Major Fred Burnham, a famous scout who had learned his skill among the Red Indians. So quick was B.-P. to read the meaning of any sign, that Burnham nicknamed him "Sherlock Holmes". At night B.-P. would put on rubber-soled shoes and then go off prowling amongst the Matoppo Hills where he learned to know all the intricate paths and windings amongst the rocks; he invariably brought back exact information of the positions of the Matabele warriors. They soon came to know him and did all they could to capture him, They called him "Impeesa", which means, "the Wolf that never sleeps", and at sight of him they would yell this name with horrible threats of what they would do if he fell into their hands.

Time and again he led attacking parties by the routes he had discovered, bringing them out at the exact spot from which they could best attack.



On one occasion his men suffered from lack of water, but his quick observation noticed that a buck had been scratching up the sandy soil in one place; he argued that this meant water; he dug down with his hands and found a thin trickle which relieved the worst thirst.

His most important engagement was against a leader named Wedza who had taken refuge in some hills which were naturally defended by masses of rock and steep approaches. The small force under B.-P. could do little by direct assault, so it was necessary to bluff the enemy. B.-P. had one hundred and twenty men under his command; twenty-five of them he sent off in one direction with orders to act as if they were ten times as strong; they scattered along the ridge and by constantly keeping on the move and firing their rifles from different points gave the impression of a very strong force.

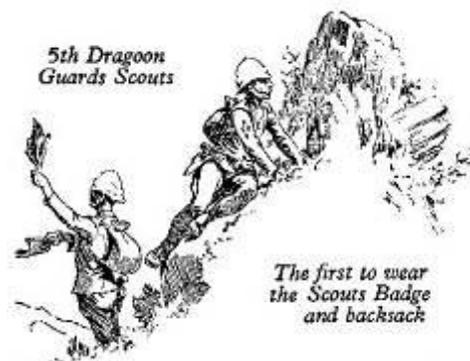
When night came, B.-P. had fires lighted at wide distances; these were kept flaming by moving patrols, who also were ordered to fire at intervals. All this gave Wedza the idea that a vast army was against him; after some skirmishing he drew his main forces off under cover of darkness and left the stronghold to the British.

It was during one of these expeditions that B.-P. got as a trophy a koodoo horn which was to have its part in Scouting. He used it at the camp at Brownsea Island in 1907, and later handed it over to Gilwell when the training camp opened in 1919. He used it himself at the opening of the Coming-of-Age Jamboree in 1929. It can now be seen in the Group Room at Gilwell Park.

Return to India.

B.-P.'s services in this campaign earned him another promotion and in 1897 he sailed to India again to take command of the 5th Dragoon Guards. He was a strict disciplinarian but he did not stand on his dignity too much and was on good terms with his officers and men. He gave much attention to questions of health and to finding ways and means of making the men more contented. He took part in concerts and showed all his old skill as a performer. On one occasion a private from another regiment gave a turn at a regimental concert. Private Brown, as he was called, was so dull and dreary that his performance was greeted with cat-calls. Then Private Brown stepped down to the footlights and said that he thought it a shame to treat a fellow soldier like that; he was doing his best! Just then someone called out, "Why, it's B.-P!"; whereat the disguised commanding officer gave up pretending and soon had the audience in roars of laughter at his jokes and songs.

The officers found that he was still skilful at pig-sticking and polo. He was always thinking out schemes for making the lives of the men more interesting, but his greatest success was in the training



he gave them as scouts. This was something new in the army. He divided the men up into small units, each under an N.C.O. who was responsible for the efficiency of his men; the training was given in the form of competitions and what we should call wide games. Sometimes the men were sent out in pairs to carry out a survey; they had to look after themselves and make a full report on their return. Those who did well gained a badge – it was the arrow-head at the end of the north point of the compass; the War Office gave permission for this badge to be worn; it was the first badge of efficiency permitted in the army.

Just before he went on leave in 1899 – it was actually his farewell, though no one knew it at the time – he was glad to receive the praise of the Commander-in-Chief on the efficiency of his regiment.

When B.-P. arrived in England, he had with him the manuscript of a little book called *Aids to Scouting*; he had written most of it during periods of leave in Kashmir when he spent his time sketching and studying wild life. The book summed up the training he had given his soldier-scouts, and he thought of it as a military handbook that might be of use to all soldiers. It was in fact to prove another link in the chain leading to the Boy Scouts,

South Africa.

He had not been home long before Lord Wolseley, the Commander-in-Chief, summoned him to the War Office. Here is part of their conversation.

“I want you to go to South Africa. Can you go next Saturday?”

“No, sir.”

This sounded like mutiny! But B.-P. added, “There’s no ship on Saturday, but there is one on Friday.”

Wolseley burst out laughing, and explained what he wanted B.-P. to do.

War was threatening in South Africa between the British and the Boers of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. If this happened it was vital to protect the northern and northwestern frontiers of the Boer Republics. B.-P. was to raise two regiments of mounted cavalry for this purpose and take up positions along the frontiers, but all had to be done as discreetly as possible.

Such a job was exactly the kind to suit B.-P. He was given a free hand, and had to use his own wits in a very difficult situation. When he arrived at Cape Town in July, 1899, all kinds of obstacles were put in his way as the authorities did not want to do anything to upset the Boers. He fixed his headquarters at Bulawayo and was soon enlisting men. One of the regiments was under Colonel Herbert Plumer (later Field-Marshal) who had worked with B.-P. in the old Matabele days and was, in later years, to work with him again in the Boy Scouts.

There was not much time for the usual kind of training, so B.-P.’s methods of working in small groups and of having very practical manoeuvres were once again used, and again with full success. By the end of September, when war was certain, he had his two regiments ready for the field. It was a triumph of organisation.

Mafeking.

War was declared on 11th October. By this time B.-P. had left Plumer with one regiment in Rhodesia and he himself with the other made his headquarters at Mafeking just on the borders of the Transvaal. At once General Cronje with nine thousand Boer soldiers advanced on Mafeking thus relieving the pressure on the small British forces in the country. This alone made the holding of Mafeking a valuable exploit. Probably the Boers thought they could easily take the little town for it lay out in the open veldt and had no natural defences; to-day a few tanks could have done the job in a few hours. B.-P. had trenches dug all round with earth works or small forts at strategic points. His garrison consisted of just over a thousand men, many of them without experience of warfare; there were also eight thousand natives, but they took no part in the struggle as neither side wanted to begin a White v. Black conflict.

The artillery was out of date, and even the shells were so ancient that the fuses had to be wedged in with paper. Two more guns came into use. One was manufactured in the railway workshop; this was known as "The Wolf". The second was an old eighteenth century gun which was found to be serving as a farm gatepost. When they dug it out and cleaned it up they found on it the maker's initials which were B.P.! Against these poor weapons the Boers brought guns of the latest type including a 94-pounder – a big gun for that period.

How then did Mafeking hold out for seven months? There is only one answer – by B.-P.'s resourcefulness and cheerfulness. The Boers knew of his Matabele reputation and they were never sure what next he would be up to; he kept them guessing all the time. He had no intention of sitting still to be shot at; he knew that the best defence was attack, and he knew also that if everyone was kept busy there would be a better spirit in face of such odds.

Some of his schemes were pure bluff. Thus dummy mines were buried at intervals all round the town and warnings put up of the danger to any unwary person; he knew that this information would soon get out to the enemy. To give a greater appearance of reality, he with an engineer went out one day and tested one of the mines; it gave a most satisfactory bang, and the news quickly spread. As a matter of fact this particular mine had a stick of dynamite in it; the others were filled with sand. The demonstration made the Boers cautious of approaching the town at night, and a night attack was the greatest danger. Another ruse, with the same purpose, was the invention of a movable searchlight. There happened to be amongst the besieged a traveller in acetylene lamps; his stock was turned to good account. A reflector made of biscuit tins was nailed on the top of a pole; the light could be switched on from a trench for a few minutes; then the contraption would be hurriedly taken to another section and again the light shone out. In this way the Boers got the idea that the town had a whole battery of searchlights.

By agreement, there was no fighting on Sundays – this was before the days of all-out warfare – and both besiegers and besieged would move about more freely. The Boers could be seen lifting their legs to get over the barbed wire round their positions. There was no barbed wire round Mafeking, but B.-P. got his men to go through all the proper motions to give the Boers the idea that the town was encircled by wire.

He encouraged all kinds of games and amusements on Sundays as a means of keeping up the people's spirits; in these he took a full share himself; at one moment he would be seen serving out tea – as long as they had any – from a wagon, at another acting as a circus-master at a mock performance. All this helped to give the besieged a feeling of confidence. B.-P. had a look-out tower built near his headquarters; the townsfolk would see him up there peering through his glasses at the enemy lines, and they would say, "It's all right; the Colonel has his eye on them" or "Seems to know what he's doing."

One determined attack by Cronje was driven off, after which the Boer general withdrew with a large number of his men and left a subordinate in charge. The Boers had come to respect B.-P.'s resourcefulness; they knew there was little chance of catching him napping. Night after night he would slip out of the town and go out on lonely scouting expeditions to find out if the



guns had been moved, or if the trenches were being pushed nearer Mafeking. He would make the round of the outposts to be certain that all his men were on the alert. It was a mystery to his officers and the townsfolk as to when he slept; he was satisfied with snatches of sleep during the daylight.

As the months went by, conditions became more severe. The little town was a long way from the main scene of the war; disaster after disaster to the British forces cast a gloom on all. At home the heroic defence of this tiny outpost brought encouragement and hope. Forces could not be spared for an attempt at relief until Cronje surrendered to Lord Roberts in February, 1900. Meanwhile food was getting short. Horses and other animals went into the pot; not a bit was wasted. A kind of “bill-sticker’s” paste, as B.-P. called it, was made out of husks of oats as a substitute for flour. All kinds of emergency arrangements had to be made for carrying on the life of the town. B.-P. designed a £1 note for local use, and stamps were also printed. The first – done without his knowledge – had his portrait on them, but he had this design withdrawn as soon as he saw them, and a drawing of a boy on a bicycle was substituted. Even now people believe that the use of B.-P.’s portrait was a bit of self-advertisement on his part; it is a hard job killing such stories, as the stamp still comes on the market.

Mafeking Scouts.

The “boy on a bicycle” is important. The lengthening of the lines of defence and the toll of casualties meant a shortage of man-power. Lord Edward Cecil, B.-P.’s staff officer, decided to make use of the boys of the town as messengers and orderlies. They had a uniform of khaki with “smasher” hats – that is cowboy hats turned up on one side, or forage caps. Their ages ranged from nine upwards and they were under the leadership of a boy named Goodyear. At first they rode donkeys, but these gradually had to help fill the cooking-pots, then they used bicycles. Their efficiency and cheerfulness impressed B.-P. When one of the boys on one occasion rode through shell-fire to deliver his message, B.-P. said, “You’ll get hit one of these days riding about like that when shells are flying.” To which the boy replied, “I pedal so fast, sir, they’ll never catch me.”

One of the duties of these boys was to take turns on duty on top of one of the higher buildings and ring the alarm when the Boer guns were fired so that everyone could take cover; even shells travelled more slowly in those days!

The last serious attempt to carry the town was made on 12th May. The boys were then under fire all day, running messages and doing anything for which they were needed. The assault was beaten off and then the boys had the proud experience of escorting the prisoners into the town.

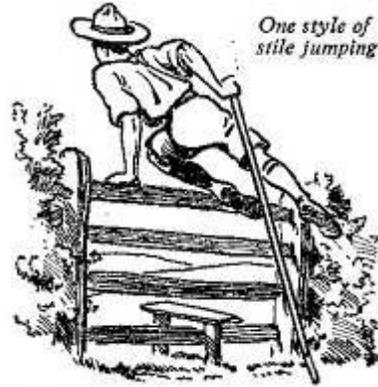
News of an approaching relief force at last came, and on 16th May the way was dear. Amongst the first to enter Mafeking was B.-P.’s younger brother. The town had held out for 217 days during which some 20,000 shells had been fired into it; there had been nearly a thousand casualties including half the officers. When it was all over, B.-P. wrote, “We were all so tired that all we wanted was to have a good sleep.”

The news of the relief of Mafeking was received with rapturous excitement in Great Britain; the cheerfulness of the defenders who had refused to give in after months of privation, captured the public imagination. B.-P. became the hero of the day. His services were at once recognised by his promotion to the rank of Major-General, and by the honour of the C.B. Queen Victoria sent him a telegram of congratulation, and Wolseley and Roberts both praised his leadership and resourcefulness.

Naturally the public wanted to show its feelings towards the defender of Mafeking, but the war was not over, and a soldier can get little rest. After a few months campaigning to the east of Mafeking, B.-P. was asked to undertake another special job. This time it was to recruit and train a corps of men to police the country when peace came.

The S.A.C.

B.-P. set to work with all his usual enthusiasm and thoroughness on his new duties. His organising abilities were considerable; this did not mean that he tried to do everything himself; once the main lines of development had been laid down and fully examined in detail, he handed over the carrying out of the job to others, just keeping an eye on how things were going. His training as a scout had taught him how to see the smallest signs of inefficiency, and then he acted promptly. In after years in the Boy Scouts he used the same methods; there was nothing dictatorial in his attitude; he welcomed ideas and suggestions, but once a decision had been reached, he insisted on the plan being carried out.



Almost single-handed (for most officers were still fully occupied with the war) he drew up a scheme for the South African Constabulary, and saw the beginnings of the organisation established before his health broke down. The surprising thing was that it had lasted so long; the strain of Mafeking had been enormous, and following that had come active campaigning and then the intensive work of creating a new police force. So he was ordered home on sick leave.

Now people had their chance! Wherever he went he was received by enthusiastic demonstrations. He tried to dodge them as often as possible; for instance, when he arrived at Southampton he got the railway officials to stop the train just before reaching London so that he could slip off to a friend's house and lie low for a while.

When Edward VII, who had just succeeded to the throne, invited him up to Balmoral, B.-P. chose a roundabout route to avoid the demonstrations. At the end of his visit the king gave him a haunch of venison, and said, "I notice that you don't eat enough. You must keep up your system. Don't forget – eat more!"

There were a number of civic receptions which B.-P. had to attend, but probably the event he appreciated most was the laying of the foundation stone of the Charterhouse War Memorial.

Peace.

He was back in South Africa at the beginning of 1902. The S.A.C. was already making a name for itself, for while the war continued it took part in many minor actions. Peace came in June, and then the S.A.C. could turn to its real purpose – establishing good order and good relationships throughout the country. B.-P. himself toured thousands of miles inspecting his men and encouraging them in their difficult work. He had trained them to work in pairs and to take responsibility for settling problems on the spot and not waiting for some higher authority to do their thinking for them.

When it was clear that the S.A.C. could tackle its job successfully, the War Office called B.-P. to other duties. He was appointed Inspector-General of Cavalry, the highest position for a cavalry man. We need not here describe this stage of his career in detail except to note that he once more showed that he had his own way of doing things and was not afraid to try new methods which shocked the old stagers.

His term of office came to an end in 1907 when he was fifty years of age, and in the normal course of events he would have retired from active service to enjoy a leisurely life. For a few years he helped with the formation of the new Territorial Army and trained them by methods which were unusual at that time; he planned what we call wide games for them, and gave them outdoor training in looking after themselves and in responsibility.

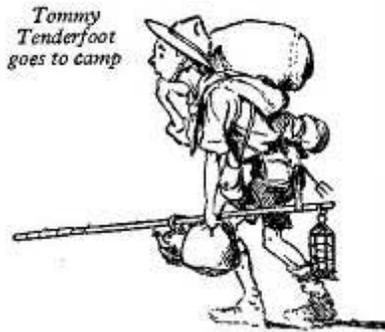
Meanwhile a new life was opening up for him – the Boy Scouts.

Scouting for Boys.

We must go back a few years to see how this all began. After Mafeking many boys wrote to B.-P. to get his advice – or his autograph! For instance a Boys' Club wrote to him, and in reply he said, "You should not be content with sitting down to defend yourselves from evil habits, but should also be active in doing good. By doing good I mean making yourselves useful and doing small kindnesses to other people." Then he went on to suggest that each of them should promise to do at least one good turn a day to other people.

When he got back to England he was surprised to find that his little military handbook *Aids to Scouting* was being used for training boys in schools and clubs. Then came an invitation from Sir William Smith to inspect his Boys' Brigade. B.-P. was impressed with the smartness and keenness of the boys, and suggested that more boys would join if they had such exciting activities as scouting games. Sir William welcomed the idea, and asked for a practical scheme.

This set B.-P, thinking; he was never in a hurry to make paper plans but liked to work an idea out carefully and to discuss it with others. He drew up a short scheme of training for the use of the Boys' Brigade, but this was only partly adopted. Then he thought something of the kind might be useful for other boy organisations, so he worked it out in greater detail. Friends encouraged him to re-write his *Aids to Scouting* as a book for boys. He began to do this, but soon decided that he must see if his ideas were practicable. So he got together a mixed company of boys, some were the sons of friends and others were from the Boys' Brigade. He took them off to camp on Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour in August, 1907.



There were twenty boys and they were divided into four Patrols: Wolves, Curlews, Bulls and Ravens. They followed much the same programme as thousands of Boy Scout camps since that date, so we need not describe it here. There could be no doubt of its success; it showed that the kind of activities B.-P. had put in his scheme were popular and enjoyable. After the camp he settled down to complete *Scouting for Boys*, but he also addressed public meetings to explain his ideas. The first of these was at Hereford on 8th November, 1907, and even before his handbook was published, some Scout Patrols were formed; for their guidance they had his outline plan in a pamphlet.

Scouting for Boys was published in six fortnightly parts each costing fourpence; the first came out in January, 1908. The success was immediate and even startling. Boys bought up the little books by the thousand, and at once formed themselves into Patrols; they persuaded likely men to become Scoutmasters and so were able to have Troops.

Now this was not quite what B.-P. had intended. He had thought of Scouting as an extra activity for existing boys' organisations with perhaps, here and there, separate Scout Patrols when no other organisation existed. But the rapid spread of Scouting as a separate thing was something he had not anticipated. Letters asking for advice poured in; an office had to be set up to deal with inquiries; in fact, a new boys' movement had sprung into being. Nor was it just a mushroom growth; the numbers increased steadily, and more and more demands were made on B.-P. to attend rallies and camps. He ran a second one himself up in the north at Humshaugh in 1908, and a third one in 1909 at Buckler's Hard on the south coast; it was there that Sea Scouts began.

Scouting Spreads.

The next surprising development was that Scouting was taken up outside the British Isles. Chile was the first foreign country to have Scouts (1909), and of course the British Dominions and Colonies soon had their Scouts.

In 1909 B.-P. took two Patrols of Scouts to Canada. They were chosen by competition through *The Scout* which was first published on 18th April, 1908, and soon reached a circulation of over 100,000. From Canada, B.-P. went on to the United States. Here is the story of how the movement was introduced to that country.

An American publisher, William D. Boyce, found himself stranded in a London fog; a Boy Scout (whose name is not known) helped him to find the place for which he was searching; the boy refused a tip, explaining that, as a Scout, it was his job to help other people without reward. This so impressed Mr. Boyce that he made inquiries about this new boys' organisation, and he took back with him copies of *Scouting for Boys* and specimens of badges. From that incident the Boy Scouts of America date their beginning.

At Gilwell Park, on one of the lawns, you can see a statue of an American buffalo which was presented to the Boy Scouts of Great Britain in acknowledgement of this incident.

Crystal Palace.

The year 1909 was indeed an important one, for the first big rally was then held; this was at the Crystal Palace and some ten thousand Scouts were there – only two years after the Brownsea Island camp. As B.-P. rode round the grounds he was surprised to see a group of girls wearing Scout hats. They explained that they wanted to scout like their brothers; from that day may be dated the beginning of the Girl Guides.

By now the Scouts were taking up so much of his time that he had to consider his own future; at length, with the approval of the King, B.-P. resigned from the army (May, 1910). He was created a K.C.V.O. in recognition of his great services.

The next landmark in Scouting was the Windsor Rally of 1911 when about 30,000 Scouts were reviewed by King George V. The boys were probably as eager to see their Chief as to see the King. B.-P. moved about among them so that they got to know his slim, wiry figure, and to recognise the deep voice that always seemed so youthful. They found too that he was not a stiff, unapproachable Important Person, but someone they could chat with and who always took a great interest in them and what they were doing.

It was at Windsor that the first Rush-In was carried out. B.-P. wanted to avoid too formal an inspection; so instead of long ranks of boys waiting for long periods for something to happen, he made them lie down under what cover was possible, and then, at a signal, to leap up and charge forward, brandishing their staffs and shouting their Patrol calls until they reached an agreed position; complete silence then followed. The first time this was done must have been almost terrifying to the onlookers when they saw this vast mass of boys rushing down on them.

In the following year the Boy Scouts were delighted to hear of the engagement of their Chief to Miss Olave St. Clair Soames, and a penny collection produced a motor car as a wedding present.

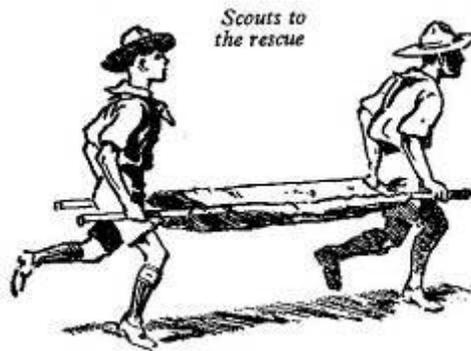
That same year saw another kind of demonstration – an Exhibition of Scouting at Birmingham; this told the public something of the handcraft and hobby work that the boys were learning as Scouts. Gradually the public was getting to know what the Boy Scouts were doing.

The Chief was a very busy man; what with dealing with a heavy correspondence, carrying on his work at Headquarters, visiting Scouts in all parts of Great Britain as well as in other countries, and working out new ideas, such as Wolf Cubs, it was a marvel that any one man could manage it all. How was it done? Partly by his good use of time. At home he slept in a verandah bedroom in the simplest surroundings; he was up early for a run with his dogs – he loved all animals but especially dogs – then he would plan his day to fill every minute; if he had to wait for a train, he would jot down ideas or answer some of the letters that needed his personal attention; in between whiles he would make a sketch or a painting, or do some gardening, or perhaps model a head in clay. The Scout Shop, for instance, wanted a statuette of a Boy Scout, so of course B.-P. was asked to do the model; or a new certificate was needed, so they turned to him for the design. He managed to get a few days occasionally for his

greatest relaxation – fishing; he liked that sport especially because he could be alone amidst beautiful country.

War.

Then came the 1914-18 war. Many people thought that this young movement, only six years old, would collapse; facts proved far otherwise. Sea Scouts at once took over many coastguard duties, and it was not until 1920 that their services could be ended; during that time some 30,000 Sea Scouts passed through this service. Other Scouts were used in all kinds of ways; guarding railways and bridges, helping in hospitals, canteens, and other forms of national work, acting as messengers, and as buglers to sound the “All Clear” after air raids. What did B.-P. do during that war? It was sometimes said that he did secret service work in Germany, and one American newspaper reported that he had been shot in the Tower as a spy! Neither statement was true! He was far too busy in other ways to go off to Germany on such a mission. He did a great deal of Y.M.C.A. work for the forces in France, and he and Lady Baden-Powell ran the first Scout Hut at Etaples for a time. Then he toured the coasts to see how the Sea Scouts were carrying on with their duties, and he attended rallies and conferences to encourage Scoutmasters and Scouts to keep going in spite of the difficulties of the times. The War Office made use of his services as a Lt-General for inspections and for liaison work.



The Movement was not standing still; the junior branch, the Wolf Cubs got on its feet in 1916 and for them he wrote *The Wolf Cubs Handbook*. He was also planning a scheme for Senior Scouts, as they were at first called, or Rover Scouts, as they later became.

The period after the war was one of expansion, and at last B.-P. was able to carry out an idea he had long contemplated – a permanent Training Camp for Scouters. That last word was adopted for all adults in the movement as he did not like the word “officers”.

The chance came when Mr. W. de Bois Maclaren, a District Commissioner of Rosneath offered to buy a camping ground as near London as possible. So Gilwell Park entered the Scout world. The boys were camping there in the summer of 1919 and the first Training Course for Scoutmasters was held in that September.

B.-P. already had a scheme of training ready. It was to be in camp and the Scouters were to be divided into Patrols with each member taking his turn at the various jobs. Those who passed this practical course and also a theoretical course and proved able to apply their training, received the Wood Badge; this consists of two beads copied from those B.-P. brought back from the Zulu war of 1888. These Scouters belong to the First Gilwell Park Group of which B.-P. was the Honorary Group Scoutmaster; they wear a grey scarf with a patch of Maclaren tartan on the back. Now, many years later, you can meet members of that Group in all the countries where there are Scouts.

During the early days B.-P. used to visit each Gilwell Course, but this was impossible when his world tours took him away so much. If he was in England on the day, he was at the Gilwell Reunion, and his talks at the camp fires were always memorable and impressive. He liked taking distinguished people to Gilwell and, even more, he liked camping there when he could stroll about the camping fields and chat with the Scouts.

First Jamboree.

It had been hoped to have a big camp for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of Scouting, but the war stopped that. The earliest possible date was 1920. At first this camp was intended for British Scouts, but B.-P. threw out the suggestion, "Why not invite the foreign Scouts as well?" Then he thought of a special name for this kind of rally – JAMBOREE. It sounded strange at first, but now everyone knows what a Jamboree is; as it is a camp of Scouts from all the countries where the Movement exists, we speak of a World Jamboree. The Jamboree of 1920 was held in Olympia with a camp at Richmond, but since then all have been held in camp. In addition to Scouts from many parts of the British Commonwealth, there were Scouts of twenty-one other countries. The public suddenly realised that here was a new world-wide movement that could have great influence on peaceful developments.



It was at this Jamboree that B.-P. was acclaimed Chief Scout of the World – a title that died with him. There was also another important event. The heads of the various contingents got together and decided to meet every other year at a Conference, and to form an International Bureau which would keep all the countries in touch with each other and encourage camping and hiking from country to country.

B.-P. was always fond of travelling and he enjoyed seeing new places and new people, so he made many tours with Lady Baden-Powell to see how Scouting was progressing in various parts of the world. In 1921 he was back in India, and in 1923 he went off to Canada again and the United States. These tours were a valuable link between the Scouts of all countries and the encouragement he gave them and the public support he won stimulated everyone to do his best. So the numbers went on growing. By 1924, the year of the second World Jamboree, there were nearly 1,350,000 Scouts

in the world.

That Jamboree was preceded by an Empire Jamboree at Wembley when over 12,000 British Scouts camped together and gave their displays and made friends. Many of them went on to Copenhagen for the Second World Jamboree where thirty-three nations were represented. At the final rally it poured with rain, but B.-P. brought a laugh by saying, "I've seen great numbers of Scouts in my life, but I've never seen any as wet as you are!"

In September of the next year, he set off with his family to South Africa which he had not visited for nearly twenty years. He had a very full programme of rallies and meetings, but illness prevented him from doing all he wanted to do. He regained his health, as he said, by "a severe course of trout fishing".

Arrowe Park.

Back in England, plans were already being made for the Coming-of-Age Jamboree at Arrowe Park, near Birkenhead, in August, 1929. As a prelude to that, B.-P. had a reunion at his home, Pax Hill, Bentley, in Hampshire, of the survivors of that first camp on Brownsea Island. Twelve of them were able to meet again and talk over those early days.

The great camp at Arrowe Park illustrated the widespread character of the Movement. The Scouts came, fifty thousand of them, from forty-one countries and from thirty-one parts of the British Commonwealth and Empire. Numbers give no idea of the good fellowship, the fun, the swapping of badges, and even uniforms, the expeditions and visits, all nations mixed up together, the attempts at strange languages, the camp fires and displays and all that camping means. Pouring rain did not damp enthusiasm but added to the gaiety of things by producing a sea of mud in which all slipped and slithered losing dignity and rank in a common mud bath! The more formal

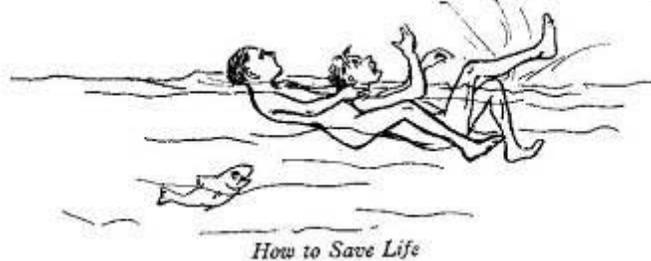
side of the Jamboree was impressive; the march past of the nations and visits from notabilities from the Prince of Wales downwards; the Prince camped there too. Then there were the religious services when boys of many creeds worshipped God.

The Scouts combined to present their Chief with a Rolls-Royce car and caravan – promptly christened the Jam-Roll. You can see that caravan now at Gilwell Park.

The well-known portrait of B.-P. by David Jagger was also painted at this time; this hangs in B.-P.'s Room at Imperial Headquarters. There too you can see many mementoes of him and his varied career.

The highest honour he received at this Jamboree was the peerage conferred on him by King George V. It was significant that B.-P. decided to use the title of Baden-Powell of Gilwell, for this showed the importance he attached to the training and camping done there.

The badge of the Jamboree was a Golden Arrow; this B.-P. described at the final rally as a symbol of Peace and Fellowship to be carried to their home countries by all the Scouts gathered round him.



The enormous success of this greatest of all rallies of boys and young fellows stimulated all members of the Movement to fresh endeavours. For B.-P. it meant travelling about the world to encourage the Scouts he met wherever he went – sometimes in out-of-the-way islands in the Pacific, or in vast territories such as Canada and Australia. At times he felt he must apologise to the Scouts in Great Britain because he was away so much; as he wrote, “The Old Country is not the only country in the world, and I am supposed to be World Chief Scout. The world is rather large in size and it takes a lot of time to get from end to end of it!” In those days, air travel was still unusual, but the long voyages helped to maintain his strength. He was 75 years old in 1932, but he refused to take things easier while he had the energy and health.

At the beginning of 1931 he and Lady Baden-Powell (who had become World Chief Guide in the previous year) set off for a tour of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. These visits, however short, were treasured experiences for the Scouts wherever the Chiefs went. B.-P.'s keen observation and his wisdom enabled him to give many a hint on how things could be improved or further developments made. He was always quick to pick out and praise any new idea for making the training more interesting and attractive. Right to the end of his life he encouraged initiative in others; he had little use for routine methods and red tape.

B.-P. was present at the big events of those years; the first Rover Moot at Kandersteg in 1931, the fourth World Jamboree in Hungary in 1933 and the second Rover Moot in Sweden in 1935. Those who attended came away with renewed inspiration from the talks he gave them. His speeches were always friendly and informal; listeners did not feel that they were listening to some exalted personage, but to a man who understood their own feelings and desires.

There was another world tour in 1934. He sent accounts of what he saw to *The Scout* week by week, for during all the years from 1908 it was rare for him to miss writing a weekly article and very often adding a sketch.

80th Birthday.

The year 1937 brought his 80th birthday, and it was to be a wonderful anniversary for him. The actual day he spent with his old regiment in India; for the last time he wore his full uniform and took the salute at the parade. He was back in England for the annual St. George's Day Service for Scouts at Windsor; he watched Rovers and Scouts at their many duties at the



B.-P.'s Doodling

Coronation. The King conferred on him the highest honour he had at his command – the Order of Merit. The President of France sent him the Grand Cordon of the Legion of Honour, and from the United States came the Wateler Peace Prize. It was as if the nations were combining to recognise the worth of this wonderful man of eighty.

Then came the World Jamboree in Holland – the last he was to attend. Many must have realised, as he certainly did, that in the nature of things they dared not hope to see the well known figure of their beloved Chief or hear his strong voice at another Jamboree. It was indeed ten years before another was possible. Here are some of his words:

“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 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. . . . Now good-bye. God bless you all.”

The Chief camped at Gilwell that September for the annual Reunion; they always made it seem like a family gathering; B.-P. would stroll about with his dogs, chatting to Scouters and watching the games and competitions. In his lifetime he had to take the leading place at many a big gathering or rally, and a smaller man might well have become swollen-headed and stand-offish, but such affairs did not affect him in that way; to the end he remained a friendly, simple man who was so interested in people and had so many things he wanted to do, that he had no time to worry about his prestige, and it is doubtful if he ever realised what a truly great man he was in the eyes of thousands upon thousands who owed him so much happiness.

He spent the winter of 1937 in Kenya at Nyeri where he had a bungalow called Paxtu after his home in Hampshire. The Chiefs returned to England in May 1938 but it was clear that B.-P. was a tired man. One traveller on the same boat noted how at the ports of call Scouts and Guides assembled on the quays to show their affection though B.-P. was too unwell to see them.

The summer was spent quietly at home, but it was decided to return to the kinder climate of Kenya for the winter. For some months he was able to fill his time with his many interests. He kept up his vast correspondence, and began a series of paintings of wild animals in their natural haunts. There were expeditions to get first-hand material for his pictures and once again he saw the veldt that had meant so much in his earlier days.

Slowly his strength ebbed, and on 8th January, 1941, the end came. He was buried in view of Mount Kenya, a fitting resting place for one who had always loved the open-air, the mountains and streams.

Memorial services were held all over the world, and in those countries where the Boy Scouts were suppressed, they mourned him in secret.

On St. George's Day, 1947, a memorial stone to him was unveiled in Westminster Abbey; above it are the flags of the two Movements he founded.



Our Founder

When you are next in London, go to the Abbey. You will find the memorial at the southwest corner of the Nave. As you read the inscription, say a prayer of gratitude for the life of

ROBERT BADEN-POWELL
CHIEF SCOUT OF THE WORLD
1857-1941