

With a Little Help From My Friends
A Salute to the Early Pioneers of the Scout Movement
by Steve Bobrowicz

As we grow close to the 100th anniversary of the Brownsea Island experiment, Scouts all over the world are celebrating the life and works of our Founder, Lord Baden-Powell. While there is no debating B.-P.'s breadth of vision, we must not forget the other dedicated people who were instrumental in the establishment and growth of Scouting in its early years. During his lifetime, B.-P. insisted in giving credit to the thousands of adult volunteers for the overwhelming success of the Movement; in fact, when he learned that he was to be raised to the Peerage (made a Lord) for his work in Scouting, B.-P. wrote: "*This fresh honour was overwhelming and for a time I could not make up my mind to accept it. I vainly pleaded that it was not I but the thousands of Scouters who had by their devoted work made the Movement what it is.*"

In keeping with the Chief Scout's desire to give credit where credit is due, allow me to introduce you to a small sampling of some of the key figures in the early history of our Movement. In this history you'll learn some of the background of the Gilwell necker, the Princess Pat song, Roland House, a most influential woman and more.

Major Kenneth 'Boy' MacLaren: 'Boy' MacLaren was Baden-Powell's fellow officer in the 13th Hussars, and his best friend throughout most of his adult life, despite B.-P.'s rapid advancement in rank and the celebrity that followed the Defence of Mafeking. B.-P. recruited his old friend to help him at the experimental camp on Brownsea Island, making him officially the Movement's first Assistant Scoutmaster. Major MacLaren went on to serve as the first Secretary of Headquarters.

Sir Arthur Pearson: Cyril Arthur Pearson was a publisher and a philanthropist. In 1906, B.-P. was staying with Pearson and learned that the latter had a particular interest in children's charities. At this time, B.-P. had developed the practical framework of Scouting, but needed help with finances and logistics. Pearson saw such value in the Boy Scout Scheme that he offered to provide financial backing and office space, and promised to publish *Scouting for Boys* (in fact, he is attributed with convincing B.-P. to use 'Scouting' in the title). C. Arthur Pearson Ltd. went on to become the official publisher of the Boy Scout Movement during B.-P.'s lifetime.

Sir Percy Everett: Percy Everett was an editor at C. Arthur Pearson Ltd. and was originally assigned to work with B.-P. in 1906. From that time until the Chief Scout retired from public life in 1938, Everett was his 'right hand man'; arguably, with the exception of Baden-Powell himself, no single person had a greater influence on the early days of Scouting. Aside from being the editor of *Scouting for Boys* and being an unofficial observer at Brownsea Island, Everett was one of the first Scoutmasters (August 1908); later, County Commissioner; Secretary of the Boy Scouts Association; first Chief Scout Commissioner for Training; and eventually, Deputy Chief Scout. It was Everett who (at B.-P.'s suggestion) developed the original scheme for the Wolf Cubs and was crucial in the establishment of Woodbadge training. In fact, he was the only person besides the Chief Scout authorized to wear six Woodbadge beads.

The Duke of Connaught: H.R.H. Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, was a younger brother of King Edward VII, and uncle of King George V. B.-P. served under him in India, and toured South Africa with him in 1906, when Baden-Powell was trying to garner support for his Boy Scout Scheme. The Duke of Connaught was one of the most vocal supporters of the Movement from its inception, going on to become the President of the Scout Association in 1913, a role which he carried until his death in 1942.

The Duke of Connaught also served as the Governor General of Canada from 1911-1916, and in that capacity became the second Chief Scout for Canada. His popularity and influence were critical to the expansion of Scouting in Canada, and particularly toward the Scouts' involvement with the war effort during World War I.

The high regard that B.-P. held for the Duke of Connaught, and the friendship between the two men, is obvious in the fact that Prince Arthur became godfather to Baden-Powell's son, Peter.

[The Duke of Connaught's youngest daughter, Princess Patricia, also had an interesting connection to Scouting. As the namesake of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Regiment, she was the real-life "Princess Pat" of whom thousands of Scouts and Guides still sing around campfires today. See sidebar for song.]

Captain Hon. Roland Phillips: Roland Phillips came from an aristocratic family, but was keenly aware that the privilege of his class had saved him from the many hardships that most other families in Victorian England were suffering, and he became dedicated to charitable work early in adulthood. When Scouting became established in East London, he quickly volunteered — becoming a Scoutmaster, and later a Commissioner, dedicated to the advancement of the Movement in England

A deeply religious man, Phillips lectured throughout England on the importance of the Promise and Law, particularly Duty to God, which he recognized as central to the Boy Scout Scheme. He published three handbooks to supplement B.-P.'s works; one of these, *The Patrol System*, is often considered second only to *Scouting for Boys* in its contributions to the Movement, and was in continuous publication for decades after Phillips' death.

Captain Phillips was killed in combat in 1916. He bequeathed his estate to the Scout Movement, which became known as 'Roland House', (a training centre, meeting facility and Scout hostel in East London), used by thousands of Scouts until it was closed in 1982, when it was replaced by more modern facilities.

W. F. de Bois MacLaren: (No relation to Major Kenneth MacLaren, mentioned earlier) Publisher and philanthropist, William de Bois MacLaren was the Scouting District Commissioner for Rosneath (Scotland). Shortly after the end of WWI, Mr. MacLaren was dining with B.-P. and P. B. Nevill at Roland House; the conversation turned to the need for a permanent Scout camping ground in the London area. Mr. MacLaren offered to make the purchase if suitable property could be found. At the suggestion of Sir Percy Everett, it was decided that the camping ground was to be combined with a training facility for Scout Officers.

A committee was struck to search for appropriate property, and met with little success until John Gayfer, a young Assistant Scoutmaster, suggested Gilwell Hall, a run-down estate where he went bird-watching and which happened to be for sale. In the spring of 1919, Mr. MacLaren purchased the property for £7,000 and donated it to the Scout Movement. He was also very active in the renovations to the buildings and grounds, personally helping with the repairs,

and donating a further £3,000 to the project. Gilwell Park was officially opened on June 26, 1919. In honour of the generosity of William MacLaren, a small swatch of the MacLaren tartan is worn on the point of the Gilwell neckerchief. Gilwellians are also eligible to become honorary members of Clan MacLaren.

Skipper Gidney: Francis ‘Skipper’ Gidney established one of the first Scout troops in England when he was 16 years old, in 1908. After university and war service, he continued to be involved with Scouting, and was appointed by B.-P. to be the first Camp Chief at Gilwell in 1919, serving from the first Woodbadge course in September 1919, until November 1923. Although B.-P. laid out the foundations of Woodbadge Training in *Aids to Scoutmastership*, many do not realize that it was Gidney, not B.-P., who developed most of the practical training course and the long-lasting traditions of Gilwell, including the Gilwell Necker. In fact, Baden-Powell was only present for two days out of twelve for that inaugural Woodbadge course.

Gidney was also a writer, one of several early Scouters who collectively authored training material for Scoutmasters under the pen-name *Gilcraft*.

P. B. Nevill: If Sir Percy Everett was Baden-Powell’s right hand, then Percy Bantock Nevill was his left. Called ‘P. B.’ by his friends, he was very proud of the fact that his initials were the reverse of B.-P.’s. Originally an accountant, Nevill began his Scouting career in the same way as most of these early pioneers — as a local Scoutmaster. He developed a reputation as one of the best Scoutmasters in the region, which attracted the attention of Baden-Powell. Unable to enlist in the military for medical reasons, he remained in England during the War, which put him in a position to become the Warden of Roland House following the death of Roland Phillips. As part of this position, Nevill made himself available one evening per month, when any Scouter could drop by Roland House to discuss their problems over a cup of tea. It was this open door policy which brought William de Bois MacLaren and Nevill together and eventually led to the establishment of Gilwell Park.

Nevill was also chair of the committee that developed the program for Senior Scouts, eventually becoming Rovers. He became the first Headquarters Commissioner for Rovers in which capacity he conceived the idea of Rover Moots and organized the first International Rover Moot at Kandersteg in 1931.

P. B. Nevill was the last of B.-P.’s contemporaries to pass on to higher service. He continued to be involved in Scouting until his death in 1975 at age 88.

Eileen K. Wade: Eileen Kirkpatrick was a young woman who took a job as a shorthand typist at Boy Scout Headquarters in 1914. Within the year she had married Major A. G. Wade, the Organising Secretary for the Movement, and became the confidential personal secretary to Baden-Powell, a position she retained until his death in 1941, afterwards carrying on in the same capacity for Lady Baden-Powell.

The contributions made by Mrs. Wade are often overlooked, but were critical to the development of the Movement. With the exceptions of his wife and mother, there was nobody who was so close to the Chief Scout; she shared his thoughts, replied to volumes of his mail, and helped him develop his ideas into the numerous books, pamphlets and articles that he wrote. She was crucial behind the scenes for many of the most important events in Scouting history, including the early Jamborees and the opening of Gilwell Park.

E. K. Wade had an enviable position as the proverbial ‘fly on the wall’ of Scouting history, and we are fortunate that she wrote several books sharing those experiences. For those who are interested in reading further on the early history of the Movement, I recommend her books *The Piper of Pax: The Life Story of Sir Robert Baden-Powell*, a biography of the Founder; *Twenty-One Years of Scouting: The Official History of the Boy Scout Movement From Its Inception*, a comprehensive look at the critical formative years 1906-1928; and, *27 Years With Baden-Powell*, a reflective look at her own experiences, written several years after B.-P.’s death. - Scouter Steve Bobrowicz is a Scouting history enthusiast and Group Commissioner for 1st Manitouwadge in Northern Ontario.

Sidebar:

The Princess Pat

(an echo song)

The Princess Pat
Lived in a tree
She sailed across
The seven seas
She sailed across
The Channel too
And she took with her
A rig of bamboo

CHORUS: A rig of bamboo
Now what is that?
It’s something made
By the Princess Pat
It’s red and gold
And purple too
That’s why it’s called
A rig of bamboo

Now the Captain Jack
Had a mighty fine crew
He sailed across
The Channel too
But his ship did sink
And yours will too
If you don’t take
A rig of bamboo

[CHORUS]

Now the Princess Pat

Saved Captain Jack
She pulled him out
She brought him back
She saved his life
And his crew too
Do you know how?
With a rig of bamboo

[CHORUS]

Hi Rick,
Some images to consider:

Cover of Scouting For Boys Copies in the Museum.

Cutline: B.-P. sketched the covers for the series of Scouting For Boys books. These books, from Scouts Canada's national Museum of Scouting, are one of two complete sets of books in the world.

Picture of the R. Tait McKenzie statue in front of our building

Cutline: This copy of the Ideal Scout by R. Tait McKenzie at Gilwell Park was a gift by the Boy Scouts of America to The Scout Association (then the Boy Scout Association) of Britain in 1966. This same statue stands at the doors of Scouts Canada's national office.

Wood Badge Beads - hard copy attached. Could you illustrate diagrams indicated?

Cutline: These sketches by B.P. show how the Wood Badge beads design evolved. Worn in button-hole of coat; Worn on rim of Scout Hat; Worn around the neck.

Patrol System Book: Again, Shoot picture from a copy from Museum. Copy on my desk.

Or picture: 14PatrolSystemBook

Cutline: This book was often considered second only to *Scouting for Boys* in its contributions to the Movement.

14photoinspection Source unknown

Cutline: Lord Baden-Powell and the Prince of Wales inspecting Scouts in the late 1920s.

14RoverButtonholeBadge Will check with Alan to see if we have one in Museum to photograph.

Cutline: Early Rover Scout Buttonhole Badge. After they were invested, Rovers received this badge to wear on their civilian clothes.