

# ADVENTURE PLUS!



SCOUTS®  
New Zealand

## 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Sea Scouts celebrated around the world

The Sea Scout Branch of the World Scout Movement celebrated it's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in August 2009 and activities took place in UK, the birthplace of the branch, as well as in New Zealand and Australia.

### The Founder of SCOUTS

Robert Baden-Powell (later to become Lord Robert Baden-Powell) grew up in a family who went sailing during holidays with older brother Warrington in charge and in "A history of Sea Scouting" Robert is quoted as saying "my first Scouting was Sea Scouting". Robert started the Scout movement in 1907. His wife founded and became the Chief Guide of the Girl Guide movement and in the same year Warrington Baden-Powell was asked to start Sea Scouts.

The grandfather of Robert and his siblings was Admiral Smyth who in 1862 wrote a large book on seafaring and which it still available in bookshops today so it made sense that a sea branch of the new movement be formed.

### The Founder of Sea SCOUTS

When the Rev. Professor Baden-Powell, the father of the family, passed away Warrington came ashore from his sea going career to look after the family and became a lawyer specialising in maritime law. Unknown to the family he had become secretly engaged to Cicely "Hilda" Farmer who was born in One Tree Hill, Auckland in 1870 and who was presented at court as a debutant in 1893. She subsequently returned to New Zealand until they eventually married in 1913 in England. Warrington wrote a book called "Sea Scouting and Seamanship for Boys" in 1912 which was the first Sea Scout handbook, a copy of which is held in the Scouts New Zealand archives. He also was an executive member of the Royal Canoe Club and a former HMS Conway cadet serving with P&O shipping company.

When Warrington passed away in 1921 he was buried (along with Hilda who died in 1955) in a family plot in the East cemetery at St Andrews in Scotland not far from the world famous golf course.

### Sea Scouts starts

The first Sea Scout activity was held on board the training ship Mercury moored at Bucklers Hard in the River Hamble in the south of England from the 7<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> August 1909. The boys were selected from many who applied by entering a competition for the 96 places available and were joined by two others one of whom was John Kipling the son of the author Rudyard Kipling. The venue was made available by Lord Montagu and the ship by the famous cricketer of the period, C.B. Fry who were friends of the then Major General Robert Baden-Powell as he was at the time.

Currently in the UK itself there are 400 Sea Scout Groups of which 101 hold Navy Recognition. In New Zealand a similar recognition system exists for the top rated 15 Sea Scout Groups.

## Sea Scouts war service

During the world wars Sea Scouts played an important role of coast watchers (an early version of coast guards). Some of those whom did go to sea joined the Deep Sea Scout branch formed later in 1928 especially for those who travelled the world in ships either in the merchant or naval vessels.

## Sea Scouts in New Zealand

In New Zealand Sea Scouts were officially started in July 1912. Colonel Cossgrove placed an advert in the Dominion Scout magazine advising that Scout officers residing in ports could apply for registration of Sea Scout Groups and compiled a leaflet to promote the new branch. Captain Marceil RNR of Christchurch and who was at the time employed by the Marine Department, was appointed "Chief Sea Scout for the Dominion of New Zealand".

In a further move Captain Wilcox, Assistant Superintendent of Marine at Lyttelton, was appointed Sea Scout Secretary and Colonel Cossgrove placed on record the sympathy of the Marine Department to the new branch. From the outset it was stated that Sea Scouts are a section of the Scout movement and not a separate organisation although they wear a different uniform to the Scouts, reflecting their nautical interest. This comprised of the seaman's cap with a cap ribbon bearing the words "Dominion Sea Scouts", navy blue shirt and shorts and socks & a black scarf.

The new section very quickly started with the Trafalgar Sea Scout Troop being unofficially formed in Lyttelton as early as 1911. In Auckland the Navy League took up Sea Scouting for the boys whilst in Waikato, Wairoa and Gisborne, groups were being formed with Napier being the first official Group to be registered under the name "Endeavour".

## Sea Scout Cutters

In 1945 the first "standard cutter", a boat to be used for Sea Scout training was designed and built and is only one of two countries having such a craft (the other being Holland). In June 2008 a set of plans were sent to Portugal where they are going to build four wooden ones. Another set of plans has been sent to a Sea Scout group in UK to enable them to build one with others already located in Fiji, Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribatti and Samoa.

There are in excess of 250 cutters in use by Sea Scouts, Sea Cadets and Young Mariners the latest ones are built in fibreglass with some wooden ones being refurbished or rebuilt currently.



## 100th Anniversary celebrations in the UK

**Author: Ron Bird**

In 2009 a Sea Scout Jamboree was held at the National Water Sports Centre at Holme Pierrepont near Nottingham UK in which 2,315 Sea Scouts from 73 Sea Scout Groups from UK, Scotland, Ireland, USA, New Zealand & Australia participated. The timing of the event was such to mark the first known Sea Scout activity held in August 1909 and featured a large tent city in an adjacent council owned reserve.



An international administration, instructors and management team ensured that the event went off without a hitch and were supported by Royal Navy staff together with their display vehicle. A large electronic score board was used to record and advise participants of activities, weather forecasts etc.

It was a great event and featured many water based activities of which some quite challenging even to the experienced Sea Scouts. The activities included white water rafting, canoeing, dragon boat racing, sailing in some ninety five assorted dinghies, high performance sailing craft, power boating using five metre rigid inflatable craft and rowing skiffs.

Many land based activities which included a large mud slide were available during the day and were supplemented with evening entertainment including a steel band which appear to be very popular with the young people in UK at the present.



The Royal Yachting Association had two 6 metre rigid inflatable powercraft craft on site which were being used in a national competition with the finals being held in Southampton. The Sea Scouts were able to participate in two age groups, 8- 12 years and 12 to 18 years and had to maneuver the craft around a timed course during which they also had to recover a simulated "man overboard" . There were some excellent times recorded and the winner from the Jamboree, a Sea Scout from the 8<sup>th</sup> Norwich Group is in with a chance to win the RIB for his Group.

Visits by television and other media resulted in a high profile event with some VIP guests from the Community seen being conducted around the site and activities each day by Scout and Guide members.

## Ceremony at St Andrews.

This event was largely arranged by two Deep Sea Scouts from New Zealand following discussions at a Eurosea9 Sea Scout Leaders conference last year in Ireland and resulted in over 150 members of World Scout Movement and their guests gathering over the weekend of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> August at St Andrews in Scotland. This included a deputation of seven from New Zealand (see photo).



The day started early at the 8<sup>th</sup> Fife Scout headquarters which is located right on the cliff top adjacent to the Cathedral ruins and commands a great view out to sea. On this day however, an unplanned visitor appeared in the form of the Dutch Sail Training Ship the "Neiuw Amsterdam" which had anchored in the bay. Similar in size and rig to our Spirit of New Zealand she was a most welcome guest as the organisers had tried to arrange for the Scout Discovery Sailing Project vessel to call as part of her circumnavigation of England and Scotland but due to her tight schedule this was not possible.

Following a short walk guided by the local Police, the celebrations began with morning worship in Holy Trinity Church where the minister Cameron Harrison began by welcoming the distinguished guests, including the Lord Lieutenant of Fife, Margaret Dean. Roy Masini the London based Sea Scout historian was invited to give a brief introduction to Warrington Baden-Powell, his career at sea and his involvement in the formation of the Sea Scout branch. This set the background to the day.

The service had a suitable nautical theme and the Rev Harrison in introducing his sermon explained that he took his inspiration for the sermon from Jerome K Jerome's book Three Men and a Dog (not forgetting a dog called Montmorency). He turned it round and entitled his talk Three Boats and a Man (not forgetting a disciple called Peter). Three readings illustrating how boats and the sea were part of Christ's ministry were given by three Sea Scouts, one each from New Zealand, St Andrews and Ireland.

After church the celebrations moved to the 8<sup>th</sup> Fife St Andrews Scout Hall where everyone enjoyed a buffet Lunch. A video message from Michael Baden Powell grandson of the founder Robert Baden-Powell and who now lives in Australia was played on a large screen.

Following a short address and welcome by Mrs Jean Martin, the District Commissioner for North East Fife, one of the organisers, Ron Bird (NZ), stepped forward to be the master of ceremonies for the presentations and to thank the local volunteers for their magnificent support which assisted him in his task in making the day such a success.

The Lord Lieutenant presented Thomas Burt with his Queen Scouts Award and in doing so took the opportunity to thank leaders of all voluntary organizations; especially the Scout association for the time and energy they give to assisting young people achieve all that they can.

Lt Commander David Griffiths RN, Staff Officer (Sea Scouts), then presented Hamish Thorpe formerly of 1<sup>st</sup> Onerahi, now Shackleton Sea Scouts from Whangarei, with his Chief Scouts Award and Derek Colley, Regional Commissioner for East Scotland Region presented Callum Sinclair from St Andrews with his Chief Scouts Gold Award.

A model of a New Zealand Waka was presented to Mrs Martin by Peter McGowan the New Zealand Sea Scout contingent leader. After lunch they were joined by Sir Menzies Campbell MP and Frances Melville, the Provost, for a short wreath laying ceremony at Warrington Baden Powell's grave in the eastern cemetery.

Following a short address and welcome by Rev Cameron Hamilton, one of the organisers Ron Bird, outlined the historical significance of the event and the location before the ceremony commenced.

A minutes silence was held marked by two young Sea Scouts from 81<sup>st</sup> Fife (Limekilns) Sea Scouts sounding "the still" and "carry on" on bosun's pipes. Wreaths were laid on behalf of Scottish Scouting by Eleanor Lyall the Chief Scouts Commissioner. Scouts then laid wreaths on behalf of North East Fife Scouts and New Zealand Sea Scouting. A special wreath was also laid for Warrington's wife New Zealand wife, Cecilia (Hilda) and whose family originated from Brownhills Farm, St Andrews which could be clearly seen from the grave site. A Maori waiata was also sung by the New Zealand contingent as her wreath was laid.

From the outset it was decided that the day be designed not to be a sombre occasion but to be full of fun and celebration. Undoubtedly one of the lasting benefits of the day will be the friendships made across the world between the young people taking part many of whom exchanged contact details so they could keep in touch.

Many of these young people are already planning to meet again here in New Zealand, so they and their leaders better be prepared for a lot of work planning and fundraising over the next year or two. As this and many similar events and jamborees have shown throughout the last 100 years, nothing is impossible if the Sea Scouts themselves are determined that it should happen. Then usually it does.

## **Memorial**

Another decision made at the Eurosea9 Sea Scout Leaders conference last year was to raise funds during 2009/2010 to place a bust of Warrington at Gilwell Park near London - the home of Scouting. This again has fallen on New Zealand to arrange quotes and gain approvals from Gilwell Park management and Baden-Powell family members. These have now been obtained and suitable photographs of Warrington (some previously unseen) supplied for artwork to be drawn up.

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