

V2

1908
Boy Scouts and Girl Peace Scouts founded

Story: Youth organisations

Page 2 – Scouts and Guides

(Dollery, 2012)

Scouting

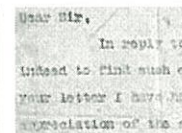
In 1907 Robert Baden-Powell held the first Scout camp at Brownsea Island, Dorset, and established the movement formally the next year. Lieutenant Colonel David Cossgrove wrote to Baden-Powell, who he had served with during the South African War, asking for permission to organise scouting in New Zealand. The first troop was established at Kaiapoi, Canterbury, in July 1908 – one of the first outside of Britain. Scouting grew quickly into the country's largest youth organisation, aided by schoolteachers, churchmen and civic leaders supportive of youth citizenship training.

The Scouts' motto was 'Be prepared'. Baden-Powell's father was an Anglican priest and 'the Scout promise', which was the basis of membership, required religious belief. Scouts carried staves – an uncomplimentary early term for them was 'broomstick warriors'. Their first hats were ex-military cadet ones, but these were soon replaced with felt 'lemon-squeezers' as worn by Baden-Powell. Uniforms were khaki and a cotton scarf was worn. Initially this was secured with a knot, but from the 1920s it was threaded through a piece of tubing called a woggle. In the 1960s the lemon-squeezer hat was replaced by a beret.

In 1965 there were 42,000 members of Scouts spread over 850 groups. Girl members were trialled in scout groups from 1976, and were eligible to join in every stage of Scouting from 1989. A new junior section, Keas, aimed at boys and girls six to seven years old, was added in the 1970s. In 2010 there were 16,000 Scouts and Scouting New Zealand had a goal of reaching 25,000 by 2015.

Sea Scouts

The first Sea Scouts troop was established in Auckland in 1912. When Baden-Powell visited the country in 1931 he was disappointed at the small number of Sea Scout troops, given New Zealand's fine harbours. By 1963 a regatta in Auckland hosted 760 scouts from 42 troops, and 1987 there were 29 Sea Scout troops in Auckland alone.



Baden-Powell writes to Cossgrove, July 1908 (1st of 3)



Scout shirt badges



Sea Scouts, Wellington, 1951



Wolf Cub enrolment card, 1966 (1st of 2)



Wrist lock no. 2



'Dyb, dyb, dyb'

The Cubmaster was called 'Akela' and the group of Cubs was a 'pack'. The Cub's motto was 'Do Your Best'. A pack meeting's opening and closing was marked by a Grand Howl, where boys pretended to be wolf cubs. The motto was also shortened to a peculiar chant: 'dyb dyb dyb' (do your best) and 'dob dob dob' (do our best).

Cubs

Baden-Powell's Scouting lore drew on his military and colonial experience. He had originally set up Scouts for boys 11 to 18 but younger boys wanted to join. In a master stroke of branding he got permission from Rudyard Kipling to use characters from his *Jungle book* to appeal to the younger boys. Younger scouts aged 8 to 12 were called Wolf Cubs. In New Zealand Scouts was for boys aged 10

and upwards from the outset.

Outdoor games

'Wide games' were planned games that took place over a wide expanse of territory, and often over a period of hours. They could involve treasure hunts, tracking exercises and strategic decision making – their purpose, apart from fun for the participants, was to put into practice the lessons learned in den activities, reinforcing the principle of Scouting as a hands-on outdoor movement. Bob-a-job weeks, where Scouts earned money for tasks, and bottle and paper drives raised funds and displayed active citizenship.

Canon fodder

When Scouting arrived in New Zealand in 1908 not everyone was enamoured of the militaristic youth movement: 'Let Mars seduce the boy. Let the bloodstained god of war blast the boy's fraternalism and flaunt in his soul the cheap aspirations of a proud-strutting, gilt-braided butcher, afire with desire for bloody deeds. A Boy Scout is an incipient assassin, a budding jingo, a germinating butcher of men – a boy being transformed into a blood lusting fool and tool to serve in the great class struggle as an iron fist for the employer class against the working class'.¹

Girl Peace Scouts

David Cossgrove and his wife Selina also developed a girls' scouting model in 1908. This predated the formation of Girl Guides in Britain by two years. Girl Peace Scouts (aged 12 to 20) were closely modelled on Baden-Powell's Scouts. The emphasis was on being active, but ladylike enough to allay public and parental concerns. They wore long khaki dresses, hats turned up at the sides, carried staves and always had a bugler. Their badge was a fleur-de-lis and their motto was 'Be Always Ready'. Fairy Scouts catered for younger girls, who wore white dresses with sailor coats. Their troop leader was a Fairy Scout Mistress complete with wand. Their motto was 'Be True'.

Girl Guides

Girl Peace Scouts became part of the global Girl Guides movement in 1923, swapping their khaki uniforms for navy blue ones, and Fairy Scouts became Brownies. Like the Scouts, Guides were encouraged to hike, learn judo, develop their tracking skills, and gain badges in topics such as New Zealand flora and fauna, and lifesaving. While the movement's long-term goals were good citizenship and public service, the emphasis was on fun at weekly meetings and rigorous outdoor activities.

Girl Guides' membership doubled to 18,000 between 1946 and 1956, and by 1965 there were 33,198. In the 1980s Guiding introduced a new junior section, Pippins, for 5–6-year-old girls. In 2010 membership of Guides New Zealand was over 12,000.

Footnotes:

1. Quoted in S. G. Culliford, *New Zealand Scouting*. Wellington: The Boy Scouts Association of New Zealand, 1958. p. 17.

How to cite this page:

Helen Dollery. 'Youth organisations - Scouts and Guides', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 17-May-12
URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/youth-organisations/2>