



The Boy Scout Movement

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By J. W. ROBERTSON, Chief Commissioner,

THE origin of the Boy Scout Movement can best be described in the words of General Sir Robert Baden-Powell, its originator, as found in the Fifth Annual Report of the English Boy Scouts. His statement is as follows:

"It has been suggested to me that a few notes to show how the Boy Scout Movement originated might be of interest.

The idea of training boys in Scouting dates from 1884, when I applied it to recruits in my regiment, and, in revised form, from 1897, to young soldiers in the 5th Dragoon Guards. I had then found the good of developing the man's 'character' before putting upon him the routine training of drill at that time considered necessary for a soldier.

When I came home, in 1902, I found my book, 'Aid to Scouting', being used in schools (and by Boy Organizations, etc.) for teaching boys. As this had been written for soldiers it was unsuitable for boys, and in 1908 I rewrote it (after an experimental boys' camp held in 1907). It was not then intended to have a separate organization of Boy Scouts, but that the Boys' Brigade, the Junior Y. M. C. A., the C. L. B., and the other recognized boys' organizations would utilize the idea.

However, such a large number of men and boys outside these organizations took it up that we were obliged to form a directorate to control it.

This at first consisted of Major McLaren and myself, with Miss McDonald, as the entire Headquarters Staff, in a room given us by Mr. Arthur Pearson, who generously helped us to a start. Lord Strathcona also gave us a donation of five hundred pounds to put us on our feet.

The Movement grew up of itself, and assumed such proportions that in 1910 I gave up the Army and took charge of it.

The idea of the dress of the Scouts was taken from a sketch of my own dress in Kashmir in 1897—in every detail.

The fleur-de-lis badge was that which I used for Scouts in the 5th Dragoon Guards; it was taken from the sign of the North Point of the compass, as shown in maps as a guide to their orientation.

The methods, aims and organization of the Movement underwent close examination by the Privy Council in 1910, and a Royal Charter of Incorporation was granted to it.