

# Looking Back In Time...

by Glenn Armstrong

On August 1st, 1907, Scouting's Founder, Robert Baden-Powell blew his kudu horn on Brownsea Island in the United Kingdom at 08:00 to open the world's first Scout camp.

*"As a matter of fact I didn't actually start the Boy Scout Movement, because the blooming thing started itself unseen.... In that year, 1909, I arranged to have a meeting of the would-be Scouts at the Crystal Palace on a certain day. And when I got there, my wig, there were a lot of them. Rain was threatening, so we mustered them inside the Palace and arranged a March Past and counted them as they entered at one door and went out at the other. There were 11,000 of them - 11,000, who had taken it up of their own accord! That is why I say that one didn't see the start: Scouting started itself."*

(Baden-Powell in the *Listener Magazine* in 1937.)

Whenever we look back at the origins of the world-wide Scouting Movement, we are drawn to our founder, Robert Baden-Powell. Throughout his books and interviews, it becomes obvious to the reader that he was overwhelmed by the impact of his series of booklets called *"Scouting for Boys"*. From time-to-time I like to look back at his books on Scouting, especially *"Aids to Scoutmastership"* which B.-P. published in 1919 and then updated in 1942. It helps me revisit the essential vision and core values of the world-wide Scouting Movement.



*Scouts Canada is both a "grass roots" Movement and a national Movement, with a long history of valuable service to youth.*

We routinely need to look back, to see where we have been and to allow us to gauge our progress as we move forward. It helps us assess the amount of change that has occurred and to celebrate our success. What kinds of changes have happened in Scouting since 1907, especially here in Canada?

To start with, over the last 99.5 years, Scouts Canada has provided 12 million young Canadians with priceless experiences that they will carry with them for the rest of their lives. Through those years, Canada went through many changes including a depression, two world wars, and the Korean War. Canadian Scouting changed the look of its uniforms many times, revamped programs and badges, and generally evolved and adapted its educational programs to meet the changing needs of young Canadians.

One of the noticeable changes in Canadian Scouting is a duality of organization. Scouts Canada is both a "grass roots" Movement and a national Movement, with a long history of

valuable service to the youth of Canada. Scouting in Canada has always been and will continue to be, a grass roots organization. Scouting occurs in church basements, schools, community clubs, meeting halls and camps all across Canada, virtually every day of the year. It occurs because there are caring adults who selflessly give of their time. I truly believe that the future of Canada and of the world is influenced by the role modeling that they exhibit.

In today's world, we must also take care of the business side of Scouting. Insurance, laws and regulations add a measure of overhead. Corporately, we must work to limit the impact on the real Scouting activities.

Scouting's core values have not changed and are timeless. Our Scouting Movement has constantly evolved and will continue to evolve in how we deliver program to meet the needs of Canadian youth and their parents, while observing our core values and traditions.

So here we are, nearly 100 years later. The vision of Baden-Powell remains timely and valuable. The challenge for each of us is to ensure that our Scouting programs meet the needs of youth today and years to come, while preserving B.-P.'s underlying vision.

On August 1st, 2007 at 08:00 local time in 216 countries and territories, millions of Scouts and former Scouts will gather together to renew their Promise in the second century of Scouting. This is a time to blow the kudu horn and to remember how Scouting was founded, what it has become and what it has accomplished.

Happy Scouting. ^

*- Glenn Armstrong is Scouts Canada's Chief Commissioner and Chair of the Board of Governors.*

Photo: Edward Pasche