

Scouting Celebrates 100th Anniversary

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[Lindsay Toler, AP Writer](#)

LONDON — Scouts around the world celebrated the 100th anniversary of their movement Wednesday, but those at its birthplace couldn't show off one of their fundamental skills — firebuilding.

While observances took place from the Kingdom of Bhutan to Ecuador, the symbolic focus was on Brownsea Island, off the coast of southern England. That's the site where Robert Baden-Powell organized a camp for 20 boys that developed into the worldwide scouting movement.

Baden-Powell, a lieutenant-general in the British army, organized that camp to teach boys outdoor skills and physical fitness. He detailed the experiences in a book called *Scouting For Boys*, and the movement gained footing when boys organized themselves into groups, persuaded adults to become their leaders and used Baden-Powell's ideas as the basis for camps, treks and other activities.

Older girls were allowed to join during the 1970s. Membership was extended to all girls, ages 6 to 25, in 1991.

"When (Baden-Powell) first ran the camp, he brought together different social classes from public schools and less fortunate backgrounds," said Jon Grimes, 19, a Scout and student at Southampton University. "It was about crossing the social divide and making friends. Our camp this year will be about making friends between people from different cultures."

Images  (showing 1 of 2 photos)



Boy Scouts from across the country, dressed in early 20th century clothing, take part in a camp on Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour, southern England, Tuesday July 31, 2007, ahead of the centenary celebrations of the Scout movement Wednesday. On Wednesday all scouts across the world will renew their promise and celebrate 100 years since Robert Baden-Powell established the movement. (AP Photo/PA, Chris Ison)

But unlike Baden-Powell's boys, today's scouts are banned from lighting campfires on Brownsea Island. The National Trust acquired the island in 1962 and forbids fires in order to protect the island's wildlife.

The campfire ban did not dampen the spirit of the 300 scouts on Brownsea Island who celebrated the centennial canoeing, hiking, making pottery, learning archery and participating in dance and drum workshops.

"Two days ago, I arrived here on a boat with 300 strangers – now they are all my friends," said Mariama Irele, 17, from Senegal. "If young people around the world can repeat what has happened here today, then we really can help build a more friendly world."

Some centennial celebrations began as early as Saturday, when Prince William opened the 21st World Scout Jamboree, in eastern England, with 40,000 youngsters from more than 160 countries.

Scouts from around the world are taking part in events. Sunrise ceremonies were celebrated as far afield as Ecuador and Bhutan. Scouts in Romania are forming a human chain around the Parliament building in Bucharest to illustrate the role that young people will play in the future.

About 1,000 scouts are cooking a huge campfire breakfast in Namibia and groups from all over Malawi will be camping at the top of the Mulanje mountain, one of the highest peaks in Africa.

"If Baden-Powell knew just how successful the movement he founded all those years ago had become, he would be delighted," said Alastair Frankl, 17, from Manchester. "Only Scouting can bring together so many young people from such different backgrounds."

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