

# Meet the Chiefs



Item Code FS295307 August 09 Edition no 2

**0845 300 1818**

**LORD ROBERT BADEN-POWELL OF GILWELL,  
OM, GCMG, GCVO, KCB**

**Chief Scout of the World, 1908-1941**

The name of Baden-Powell became known and respected in two separate spheres of life - as a soldier fighting for his country, and as a worker for peace through the brotherhood of the Scout Movement.

Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell was born in Paddington, London on February 22, 1857, the sixth son and eighth of ten children of The Reverend H.G. Baden-Powell, a professor at Oxford University. The name Stephenson was taken from one of his Godfathers, George Stephenson, the railway pioneer. B.-P. was educated at Charterhouse School, where he first became interested in the arts of scouting and woodcraft. Not an outstanding scholar, he nevertheless gained second place for cavalry in open examination for the Army and was commissioned straight to the 13th Hussars, bypassing the Officer training establishments. He subsequently became their Honorary Colonel for 37 years.

His Army career was outstanding from the start. With the 13th Hussars he served in India, Afghanistan and South Africa, and was mentioned in despatches for his work in Zululand. His career progressed rapidly. He served in Malta for three years as Assistant Military Secretary and then led a campaign in Ashanti, Africa. In 1897 he was

promoted to command the 5th Dragoon Guards, at the age of 40.

In 1899 came Mafeking, the most notable episode of his outstanding military career, by which he became a Major General at the age of only 43, and the hero of every boy. During the 217 day siege of Mafeking, B.-P.'s book 'Aids to Scouting' was published and reached a far wider readership than the military one for which it was originally intended. Back in England in 1903, after organising the South African Constabulary, B.-P. found youth leaders and teachers all over the country using his book. He spoke at meetings and rallies and whilst at a Boys' Brigade gathering, he was asked by its Founder, Sir William Smith, to work out a scheme for giving a greater variety in the training of boys in good citizenship.

He rewrote his 'Aids to Scouting' and in 1907 tested some of his theories at an experimental camp on Brownsea Island, near Poole, Dorset. Later, he published 'Scouting for Boys' in six fortnightly parts at 4d a copy. Sales of these books was tremendous. Soon boys, on their own initiative, began forming themselves into Scout Troops all over the country. Scouting spread quickly through the British Commonwealth and other countries.

B.-P., who was then Inspector General of Cavalry, retired from the Army in 1910 at the age of 53 to devote all his enthusiasm to the development of Scouting and its sister Movement, Guiding. In 1912, he married Olave Soames, who was his constant help and companion in all his work. Olave,

Lady Baden-Powell, became known throughout the world as World Chief Guide.

At the first International Scout Jamboree at Olympia, London in 1920, B.-P. was unanimously acclaimed 'Chief Scout of the World' - a title which has never been held by another Chief Scout. In 1929, at the 3rd World Jamboree held in Arrowse Park, Birkenhead, to celebrate the 21st Anniversary of the publication 'Scouting for Boys', B.-P. was created a Peer. He took the title Lord Baden-Powell of Gilwell - Gilwell Park in Chingford, London E4 being the Association's Leader Training Centre.

Amongst the honours he received were degrees from six Universities, 28 foreign Orders and Decorations, and 19 foreign Scout Awards. In 1938, suffering from ill-health, he went to live in semi-retirement at Nyeri, Kenya. He died in 1941 at the age of 83 and is buried at Nyeri. On the headstone are the words 'Robert Baden-Powell, Chief Scout of the World', surmounted by the Scout and Guide Badges.

Olave, Lady Baden-Powell, continued to foster her husband's aims and when she died in 1977, her ashes were taken to Nyeri for burial beside B.-P.

### **THE LORD SOMERS, KCMG, DSO, MC**

#### **Chief Scout, 1941-1944**

Arthur Herbert Tennyson Somer-Cocks, 6th Baron Somers, was born at Freshwater, Isle of Wight, on March 20, 1887. He was educated at Mulgrave Castle, Charterhouse and New College, Oxford. He joined the 1st Life Guards, but cut short his Army career to farm in Canada. With the outbreak of war in 1914, he returned to rejoin his Regiment and was subsequently attached to the Tank Corps. He retired from the Army in 1924, having become actively interested in Scouting two years previously.

In 1926, Lord Somers was appointed Governor of Victoria, Australia, and State Chief Scout. He led the 8,000 British Scouts to the World Jamboree in Holland in 1937. During the following winter he travelled the country visiting Scouts and talking at Scout conferences. He also undertook the task of putting the Movement on a sound financial footing with the launching of a National Scout Fund in 1938. When war was declared, Lord Somers gave an immediate lead in support of the National Service. He recommended that Scouts wear their uniforms and set the example himself when, for the first time in history, Scout uniform was seen in the House of Lords.

In March 1940, he was appointed Red Cross Commissioner for the Middle East, still maintaining close contact with Scouts wherever he went. He was elected Chief Scout on January 29, 1941, and travelled long distances to attend rallies and conferences, despite his failing health. He died on July 14, 1944.

### **THE LORD ROWALLAN, KT, KBE, MC, TD, LLD, DL**

#### **Chief Scout 1945-1959**

Thomas Godfrey Polson Corbett was born at Hans Place, Chelsea, London on December 19, 1895, and was educated at Eton. The First World War broke out when he was 18 and he went straight from school to the Army, serving with the Ayrshire Yeomanry at Gallipoli and in Egypt and Palestine. After the second battle of Gaza, he was transferred to the Grenadier Guards, won the Military Cross in France and was severely wounded in the leg. The injury interrupted his military career. In 1933, he succeeded to his father's peerage.

Just before the outbreak of the Second World War, the Territorial Army was being expanded and Lord

Rowallan was asked to raise a new battalion of the Royal Scots Fusiliers which he trained on Scout lines and took to France in April 1940. At Dunkirk, he extricated his men and arms and brought them off from St. Valery with the remnants of the 51st Division. Back in Scotland he was given command of a Young Soldiers' Battalion and later he was made responsible for training potential officers.

Lord Rowallan joined the Scout Movement in 1922 as a District Commissioner. In 1944, he became Scottish Headquarters Commissioner for the training of Scout Leaders and in the following year was appointed Chief Scout of the Commonwealth and Empire. In 1951, his outstanding services were recognised by a Knighthood in the Birthday Honours List. Soon after his retirement as Chief Scout in 1959, Lord Rowallan was appointed Governor of Tasmania, holding this post until he retired in 1963 to his home at Rowallan Castle, Kilmarnock. Lord Rowallan died in November 1977.

### **THE LORD MACLEAN, KT, GCVO, KBE**

#### **Chief Scout 1959-1971**

Charles Hector Fitzroy Maclean was born in London on May 5, 1916, and was educated at Canford School in Dorset. With a regular commission in the Scots Guards he served in the Guards Armoured Division and the 6th Guards Tank Brigade, seeing service in France (landing on the beaches of Normandy), Belgium, Holland and Germany. He was retired from the Army in 1947 with the rank of Major.

His contact with Scouting dated back to his days as a Cub Scout in 1924, in London. After becoming Chief Scout in 1959, he visited some 50 countries to promote Scouting. In 1959 he was also appointed Chief Scout of the Commonwealth.

Lord Maclean succeeded to the title of the 11th Baronet of Duart and Morvern in 1936, and as the 27th Chief of the Clan Maclean, resided in the ancient stronghold of the Clan, Duart Castle, on the Isle of Mull. He was married and had one son and a daughter.

He had many Honours conferred upon him by Her Majesty The Queen, including a Life Peerage in 1971. Later in the same year, he was appointed Lord Chamberlain of the Queen's Household and subsequently resigned his position as Chief Scout of the United Kingdom, although he undertook to continue in another four-year term as Chief Scout of the Commonwealth. He relinquished this title in August 1975. Lord Maclean died in February 1990.

### **SIR WILLIAM GLADSTONE, Bt, DL, MA**

#### **Chief Scout 1972-1982**

Sir William (Erskine) Gladstone, great-grandson of the former Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone, was born on October 29, 1925. He was educated at Eton and became a Scout whilst there.

He saw war service in the Royal Navy which he joined in 1943 and attained the rank of Lieutenant RNVR. On leaving the Navy he gained an Honours Degree in History at Christchurch College, Oxford and entered the teaching profession. After appointments at Shrewsbury and Eton, he became Headmaster at Lancing College in 1961. During his time at Eton, he became Lieutenant Colonel of the Army section of the Combined Cadet Force. At Lancing he encouraged the school Scout Group. He retired from teaching in 1969.

After becoming Chief Scout in 1972, he inaugurated Scoutreach and took special interest in the development of Scouting in deprived areas, particularly the inner cities and new housing

estates. In 1979 he was elected Chairman of the World Scout Committee. He resigned in 1982.

**MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL J.H. WALSH, CB, DSO, DL**

**Chief Scout 1982-1988**

Major General Michael Walsh was born in Harrogate, Yorkshire, in 1927 and attended Clifton House School in the town and was a Member of the school Scout Troop. He has the rare distinction of holding the King's Scout Award with Gold Cords which, at that time, was the Movement's highest training award for proficiency and achievement.

Later he attended Sedbergh School, North Yorkshire, from where he entered the Army as a Private Soldier in 1945. In the following year he was commissioned into the King's Royal Rifle Corps (60th Rifles).

A graduate of the Australian Staff College and of the Joint Services Staff College, he held a succession of command and staff appointments during his Army career in the United Kingdom, Europe and the Middle East.

In 1978 he became Director of Army Training with responsibility for policy and direction of the Staff College, Royal Military College of Science and the Royal Military Academy. Major General Walsh retired from the Army in 1981 and became Chief Scout in 1982, a post he held until 1988.

He is a qualified Royal Yachting Association Coastal Skipper, holds a Private Air Pilot's License and is a qualified parachutist.

**WILLIAM GARTH MORRISON, CBE, DL, BA, C.Eng, MIEE**

**Chief Scout 1988-1996**

William (Garth) Morrison was born in Edinburgh on April 8, 1943. He attended Pangbourne College where he was Chief Cadet Captain of the English Schools Rugby Football Union (15 group).

In 1962, whilst attending the Britannia Royal Navy College in Dartmouth, he was awarded the Queen's Telescope. He went on to study at Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he was Captain of the University Golf Club and graduated as Bachelor of Arts in 1966. The following year, he was awarded the Queen's Sword.

In July 1970, he married Miss Gillian Cheetham and they have three children.

Garth spent twelve years in the Royal Navy, where he served as an Engineer Officer, retiring in 1973 with the rank of Lieutenant.

His other achievements include Membership of the Society of High Constables and Guard of Honour at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Membership of the Lothian and Borders Committee of the Royal Jubilee and Prince's Trusts, Trustee of the Lamp of Lothian Collegiate Trust and was appointed Deputy Lieutenant in East Lothian in 1984.

Since 1973, he has run the 560 acre family farm in West Fenton, Scotland, during which time he has held a number of key Scouting appointments. In 1973 he became the Area Commissioner for East Lothian, an appointment which he held until 1981 when he became Chief Commissioner for Scotland. In 1982 he was awarded the Silver Wolf. Garth was the Deputy Leader of the United Kingdom Contingent to the 16th World Scout Jamboree in Australia in 1987. He has been a ex-officio member

of the Committee of the Council since 1981 and is now a full member.

Apart from his Scouting activities, Garth's other leisure interests include golf, sailing and rugby.

### **GEORGE PURDY**

#### **Chief Scout 1996-2004**

George Purdy was born in 1942. At the age of eight he became a Cub Scout with the 45th West Belfast Scout Group and continued through the Group becoming an Assistant Cub Scout Leader in 1960. Since then he has held many Scouting appointments.

In 1963, whilst serving as an Assistant Cub Scout Leader for the 1st Inniskilling Scout Group, he founded the 2nd Donaghadee Scout Troop and actively gave time to both appointments. After serving for a brief period as Scout Leader with the Three Spires Scout Troop in Magherafelt he returned to the 2nd Donaghadee where, after holding a number of positions, became the Assistant Scout Leader. In 1994 he became the Chief Commissioner for Northern Ireland his first non-Group appointment.

George has played leading roles in organising all Ireland International Scout Camps and in 1983 led the Northern Ireland Contingent to the 15th World Scout Jamboree in Canada. For his services to Scouting he was awarded Medal of Merit in 1983, the long service Decoration in 1980 and its Bar in 1993. In the 1996 St. George's Day Awards List he was awarded the Silver Acorn and in May 1996, following his investiture as the Chief Scout, received the Silver Wolf.

In 1960 he began working for the Northern Ireland Civil Service where he served in a number of

departments. He retired from his position as Director of Policy and Legislation in the Department of Health and Social Services in 1996. He married Miss Judith Kerr in 1969 and they have two sons, Graham and Stuart, both of whom have been Scouts.

Outside Scouting he enjoys sport and has played hockey for both his school and the Northern Ireland Civil Service. He is a keen golfer and also plays tennis and bowls.

### **PETER DUNCAN**

#### **Chief Scout 2004-2009**

Peter Duncan was born in 1954 in London. His parents were variety performers who produced and appeared in Pantomime and summer shows. His early life was spent moving around the country with his family, attending many different schools and developing a lifelong love of acting and the stage. At 15, he left school, set on becoming a professional actor.

In the early 1970s, he became a familiar face on the small screen, taking the lead in many notable one-off dramas and TV series. Peter also appeared in films during this period including a notable cameo in the classic *Flash Gordon*. In 1978, he was offered the chance to become a *Blue Peter* presenter, which he turned down in favour of his acting career. Accepting the second offer in 1980, Peter quickly became the team's action man. Among Peter's most famous exploits were running the first London Marathon in just over three hours and cleaning the face of Big Ben.

In 1984, Peter filmed a new BBC Children's series, *Duncan Dares*. His daring-do's included a high wire tightrope act, racing a truck in the French Grand Prix and sailing a Volkswagen across the Irish Sea. He returned to *Blue Peter*,

leaving in 1986 to concentrate on acting, musical theatre and on his own production company. He has played the lead roles in a number of musicals including *Barnum*. He has produced stage versions of *Erik the Viking* and *The Gingerbread Man* as well as playing all the classic Panto roles. He has appeared in plays around the country.

In 1999, Peter, his wife, Annie, and their four children took an expedition around the world and the *Travel Bug* documentary of the trip, was shown on CBBC. This led to more travel documentaries, including a backpacking trip to China called *Chinese Breakaway*; and he recently took his son Arthur to Jordan to live with the Bedouin in the desert.

Peter is one of the best-known faces on TV. An organiser and provider of youth drama workshops, he is also renowned for his commitment to developing the potential of young people through outdoor activity and travel.

Peter was a Cub Scout. He visited Windsor as a boy to accompany his cousin, a Queen's Scout, to meet the Chief Scout, never dreaming one day he would fulfil that role himself. He is a natural Scout, and sees the Movement as a great inspiration for young people.

## **BEAR GRYLLS**

### **Chief Scout 2009-**

Bear Grylls is the UK's youngest Chief Scout, aged 35 at time of appointment. Whether it is crossing the Atlantic Arctic Ocean in an open boat, scaling Mt Everest or flying a powered paraglider to 29,000ft in the Himalayas, Bear knows a thing or two about adventure. But he is not just about breaking records in the great outdoors.

As an ex-Special Forces soldier, he is not only known around the world as the host of the hit TV series *Born Survivor* and *Man Vs Wild*, he is also an inspirational speaker, best selling author of nine books and a fervent supporter of young people getting out there to experience adventure for themselves.

Bear got his taste for the outdoors as a Scout, whilst a young boy. He was taught to climb by his late father on the sea cliffs of the Isle of Wight, and this interest rapidly developed when he left school.

His military service saw him trained in combat survival, parachuting, demolitions, trauma medics and mountain warfare as a trooper with 21 SAS. During one parachute jump he sustained a massive injury breaking his back in three places. After intense military rehabilitation, he made a full recovery and went on to become one of the youngest climbers ever to reach the summit of Everest and has led numerous other expeditions around the world. He has since been awarded an honorary commission in the Royal Navy, as a Lieutenant-Commander, in recognition of his adventurous feats and his determination to help charities and young people along the way.

This is not Bear's first volunteer role. He is also an ambassador for the Prince's Trust and is Vice President of the JoLt trust, which helps young people from troubled backgrounds experience the 'journey of a lifetime'.

Bear also balances his demanding life with his young family. Married to Shara, he has three young sons.

A practising Christian, Bear's faith is also very fundamental to him: 'There have been many, many tight spots over the years, and it takes a proud man to say he needs nothing. My Christian faith is a backbone to me, a rock to my family and

has helped me through countless difficult and scary times.'

Bear has travelled extensively to every continent in the world. Known and respected in many countries outside the UK, he is truly a global ambassador for a global movement. His languages include Spanish and French, and he has a deep respect for diverse faiths and cultures.