

INDIAN SCHOOL MUSCAT- PRIMARY SECTION

CUBS AND BULBULS- THE FOUNDERS

The Scout movement was started by Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell. He was born in Paddington-London on February 22, 1857. His family lovingly called him Stephe. As a boy, he enjoyed pretending to be a hunter. He went on all sorts of expeditions with his older brothers. They bought old boats and explored the coasts of Great Britain. At other times they were learning to look after themselves and would go on long expeditions with their gear on their backs.

After leaving school, Baden Powell joined the Army and travelled to India and South Africa. He captured Chief Dinizulu who gave him a garland of wooden beads. Later, he used these beads to make badges for students who successfully completed their training. He became the youngest Major General in the British Army.

The Commander-In-Chief of the British army sent Baden-Powell back to South Africa to deal with an expected war between the British and the Boers. The Boer War was a bad struggle between English-speaking and African-speaking whites for control of South Africa's mineral wealth—the world's richest gold reefs. While the Chief of the British army, Lord Wolseley wanted to send 10,000 troops to South Africa, the British cabinet disagreed and instead sent 20 special service officers to organise a defence of the frontiers, one of whom was Baden-Powell. He was assigned to raise a small regiment to protect Rhodesia and to deceive the Boers into thinking that more British forces were on the way. The Boers surrounded Baden-Powell and his men in Mafeking, a small town about 175 miles west of Johannesburg. Baden-Powell managed to defend the town against over 7,000 Boers for 217 days. Some viewed this as the first real victory for the British against the Boers and Baden-Powell was considered a hero. Mafeking was the beginning of Baden-Powell's idea for boy scouts.

When he returned to Great Britain, he was upset to see that the young boys had nothing to engage them and were always getting into trouble with mischief. He knew that the boys enjoyed outdoor activities and so he organised a camp for a group of 20 boys as an experiment on Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour in Dorset. Here he taught them about exploring, camping boating, stalking, life-saving and many other things that Scouts still do. An important aspect of this camp was that the boys were on their honour and were trusted to organise themselves which Baden Powell knew they could do. He wrote many books on Scouting which became popular among the people.

There are many interesting facts of Baden- Powell and the Scouting movement. One is the origin of The Left Hand Shake. When B-P entered the Kumasi, the capital city of the Ashanti, he was greeted by a warrior chief who held out his left hand. He told B-P "the bravest of the brave shake with the left hand." So began the left handshake which is used by millions of Scouts all over the world.

The explanation of the left handshake is that a warrior uses the left hand to hold the shield, while the right hand holds the spears. So to show your trust in someone, you put down the shield and greet them by holding out your left hand.

The first Scouts rally was held at Crystal Palace in 1909 where his sister, Agnes Baden- Powell came with a number of other girls dressed as Scouts and said that they were 'Girl Scouts'. Thus, the 'Girl Guiding' movement started. After his marriage, his wife, Olive St. Claire Soames better known as Lady Baden-Powell actively gave guidance to the Girl Guiding Movement.