

**Cub Scout Trainer Wood Badge**  
**Bead Presentation Ceremony**  
**Joanie Meehan**  
**April 18, 1995**

Most of you know that Boy Scouting was founded by Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell, also known as Lord Baden-Powell of Gilwell, but more affectionately by Scouts and Scouters as "B-P". Some of you may also know that, before his involvement with Scouting, he was a military man. In fact, he was the most popular war hero of the Boer War, a war between Britain and South Africa in the last few years of the 19th century. But you may not know about B-P's skill and belief in training.

As a military man, he knew the value of training. During his early military career in India, he was constantly looking for new ways to train his troops. Even before the war he wrote a book called *Aids to Scouting*, not about Scouting as we think of it, but about military scouting, a training aid for those soldiers who had to scout out enemy strengths and locations, often on their own for weeks. As his fame spread in England, his book also became very popular, especially among British boys. This eventually led him to write another book, *Scouting for Boys*, which is directly responsible for all of us being here tonight.

Even the first Scout Camp, on Brownsea Island, was a training event, where B-P trained the boys of his small group in the skills that are the foundation of Scouting.

B-P didn't neglect the adult leaders of his fledgling movement. He wrote another book, *Aids to Scoutmastership*, to train his Scouters, but soon realized that it wasn't enough, because he knew that the best training doesn't come from a book.

A district commissioner from Scotland, W.F. deBois Maclaren, had become concerned about the Scouts of East London who had no place to camp. He offered to purchase a campsite within easy reach of East London. B-P suggested that it would be even more valuable if it could also be used as a training center for scoutmasters. The new camp was called Gilwell Park, near the Epping Forest in Essex.

The first training course was held in 1919, at Gilwell, and it was run by the first Gilwell Camp Chief, Francis Gidney, from a program designed by B-P years earlier, and it had 3 parts: a theoretical part covering the fundamentals of scouting, a practical part presented during a week in camp, and an administrative part consisting of the Scoutmaster's performance in his own troop. During the practical course, the men were divided into patrols and lived much like Scouts. The instruction was covered by demonstrations, practice and games. The same African kudu horn that was used on Brownsea Island called them to the activities.

At the end of the course, B-P was looking for a special recognition, and he found among his mementos a string of wooden beads that he found during the Zulu War in 1888. He presented each man with a bead, and the course has been known since then as Wood Badge.

Since then Wood Badge courses have been run many times at Gilwell, and around the world. Most of the national Boy Scout organizations run some form of Wood Badge training for their leaders. The details are determined in each country, but the format is the same as Baden-Powell laid down so many years ago, with a practical course of a week or 3 weekends, and an application part consisting of a "ticket", a commitment of specific goals the participant must meet to receive the Wood Badge recognition. The original supply of beads ran out many years ago, but hand-carved beads are still used to recognize those who complete the requirements of Wood Badge. Every course, wherever it is held, takes place at Gilwell, since the site is renamed Gilwell for the duration, and every course is named Gilwell Pack 1 or Gilwell Troop 1.

Here in the US we run two Wood Badge courses. The most numerous by far is the Boy Scout Wood Badge, used as advanced training for Scoutmasters and others who work with troops and troop

programs. It is a wonderful program which has been run since the 1940s, and it has produced many fine Scouters.

The other course is for Cub Scouters, and I think it is doubly special because it is called Cub Scout Trainer Wood Badge. As the name implies, it is limited to those Cub Scouters who are involved in training of other leaders, and the skills that the participants learn are training skills. It has been offered on a regional basis since 1979. In the tradition of Baden-Powell, Scouters make a difference in the lives of dozens or hundreds of boys in their units, but Trainers pass on their knowledge to hundreds of other Scouters, who fan out to make a difference in the lives of thousands of boys.

- Will the escort please accompany Joanie Meehan to the front -

In August 1992, we held a regional Cub Scout Trainer Wood Badge course at Heritage Scout Reservation, near Pittsburgh. It was designated NE-CS-41. I was privileged to be the counselor to the Fox Den at that course.

The Foxes of NE-CS-41 decided to give themselves foxy names, such as Teacher Fox, and Boxy Fox. But the lady I am going to honor tonight, Joanie Meehan, was called First Fox, because she was the first in the den to arrive at Heritage. Perversely, she has decided to be the last one in the den to get their beads.

Of course, most of you know that she took time out to have a baby and other non-Scouting activities, so we all forgive her. She has met the commitments of her ticket and other requirements of the Cub Scout Trainer Wood Badge, and I am proud to present her beads to her tonight.

Please remove her temporary Wood Badge neckerchief.

Today, we present 2 wooden beads on a leather thong instead of the single bead used by B-P.

- present beads -

In honor of Mr. Maclaren, who presented Gilwell to the Boy Scouts, all Wood Badgers wear a mauve neckerchief with a swatch of the Maclaren tartan on the back. - present neckerchief -

And all Wood Badgers wear a wooden woggle, a neckerchief slide that has no beginning and no end, since Scouting is eternal. - present woggle -

This certificate will commemorate the awarding of your beads tonight. First Fox, congratulations!