

The original of what follows, and important references, can be found at http://www.thescoutingpages.org.uk/first_camp.html



The title of this page is misleading the camp BP organised from the 31st July to 9th August 1907 was actually an experimental summer camp to test his ideas in his book "Scouting for Boys" on Brownsea Island, a 500-acre, windswept tract in Poole Harbour off England's southern coast

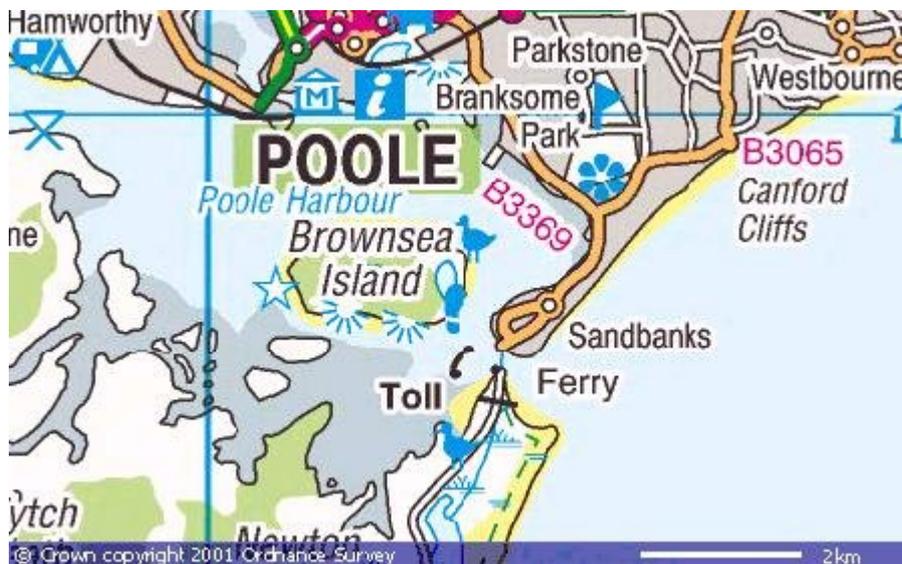


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Map showing Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour

Why Brownsea Island?

Brownsea Island was chosen for the camp because it was off the beaten track and was difficult to get to and this was due to BP being a very public figure and if the Press had got to know his plans it would have been difficult to reporters on the scent of a good story away, so that the experimental camp could be given a fair trial out of the public gaze.

In May of 1907 while on Holiday in Ireland BP met and became friends with Mr and Mrs Charles van Raalte and they invited him to visit them at their country home on Brownsea Island.

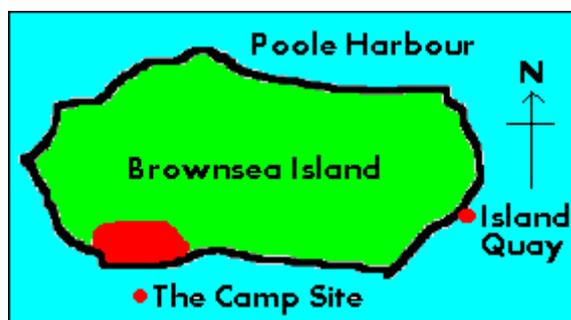
As a boy BP had sailed in Poole Harbour with his brothers and knew the Island, they had in fact made a landing on the beach the more he became convinced the Brownsea Island would be the ideal location for the camp, isolated but not too far away from civilisation to get provisions to.

A letter to Charles van Raalte asking for permission to use the island produced an immediate response. Of course he could come. To help with plans van Raalte enclosed a booklet about the island and its History which he had recently published and the more that BP discovered about the place, the more certain he became that this little piece of ground a mile and half long and about three quarters of a mile wide could not be bettered and it was agreed to hold the camp in August 1907



Postcard of the Campsite

On 29 July, 1907, Bill Harvey, one of the local boatmen, was waiting at the Customhouse Steps in Poole to take Baden-Powell, his nephew, and some of the boys from London set off to Brownsea. They boarded his motor boat Hyacinth and set out on the two-mile crossing to the island. Bill Harvey landed the party on Seymour's Pier on Brownsea and returned to Poole, while Baden-Powell and the boys made their way the half mile along the island shore to the camp site.





BP and "Scouts" on the Hyacinth on the way to Brownsea Island

The Boys

The camp consisted of 20 boys from all kinds of backgrounds, 10 of them were from the Public schools of Eton and Harrow and were the boys of Army friends and other acquaintances of BP while of the remaining 10, 7 were from the Bournemouth Boys Brigade and 3 from the Poole Boys Brigade, there was also Donald Baden-Powell, BP's 9 year old nephew and Simon Rodney, older brother of George, James and William on camp.

The boys were divided up into 4 Patrols called Curlews, Ravens, Wolves and Bulls. For patrol identification, the boys were given long, wool streamers in different colours to pin on their left shoulder - green for Bulls, blue for Wolves, yellow for Curlews, and red for Ravens. The senior boy in each patrol was assigned as Patrol Leader and was given a flag with the animal of their Patrol on it. Each patrol Leader was given full responsibility for the behaviour of his Patrol at all times, in camp and in the field. The Patrol was the unit to work or play, and each patrol was camped in a separate spot

Patrol Members

 Wolves	 Bulls	 Curlews	 Ravens
Patrol Leader	Patrol Leader	Patrol Leader	Patrol Leader
B Wroughton	T. Evans-Lombe	G. Rodney	H. Emley
Patrol Members	Patrol Members	Patrol Members	Patrol Members
C.S. Curteis	A. Primmer	Bertie Watts	B. Tarrant
J. Evans-Lombe	B. Blandford	A. Vivian	W. Rodney
Percy Medway	J. Rodney	T. Bonfield	H. Collingbourne
R. Giles	M. Noble	R. Grant	H. Noble

Key to Patrol members background

- Public School Boys
- 1st Bournemouth Boys Brigade
- 1st Poole Boys Brigade

Simon Rodney doesn't seem to have been assigned to a specific Patrol but some sources say he may have been in the Wolves, but this is unconfirmed

Each boy was given a brass fleur de lys badge which was fastened on to his coat; when he had passed a few tests (knots, tracking, the Flag) he was given another brass badge to fasten below the first, a scroll with the words "Be Prepared" on it. Kaki scarves were also issued



Each Patrol was assigned an army Tent to sleep in and a fifth tent was used by BP, his nine year old nephew Donald Baden-Powell, who served as his orderly; and his assistant Scoutmasters, an old Army friend named Kenneth McLaren and Percy W. Everett. Also on the campsite was an army cook tent and an open-sided marquee tent for shelter in a storm.

The Programme

Each day had a different theme camping, observation, wood craft and so on. Under camping such things as how to make a natural shelter out of branches, twigs and leaves, knotting, fire lighting and cooking were undertaken

Below is an outline of the programme which BP produced for the camp. (taken from 75 years of Scouting a Scouting Magazine supplement 1982 - © Scouting Magazine 1982)

DAY 1	<p>Preliminary</p> <p>After settling into camp, formation of patrols and distribution of duties, orders etc each subject of the camp was explained with demonstrations. Patrol Leaders received a special course of instruction in the field for them to impart subsequently to their Patrols</p>
DAY 2	<p>Camping</p> <p>Camp resourcefulness. Hut and mat making. Knots, Fire-lighting, cooking, health and sanitation. Endurance. Finding way in strange country. Boat management</p>
DAY 3	<p>Observation</p>

	Noting and memorising details near and far. Landmarks etc. Tracking. Deducing meaning from tracks and signs. Training eyesight, etc
DAY 4	Woodcraft Study of animals and birds, plants, stars, etc, stalking animals. Noticing details of people. Reading their character and condition, thereby gaining sympathy, etc
DAY 5	Chivalry Honour, code of the knights. Unselfishness. Courage. Charity and Thrift. Loyal to King and to Employers or Officers. Practical chivalry to women. Obligation to do a "Good Turn" daily and how to do it
DAY 6	Saving a Life From fire, drowning, sewer, gas, runaway horses, panic, street accidents etc. Improvised apparatus. First Aid etc
DAY 7	Patriotism Colonial Geography. History and deeds that won the empire. Our Navy and Army. Flags, medals. Duties as citizens. Marksmanship. Helping Police etc.
DAY 8	Games Sports comprising games or competitive practices in all subjects of the camp

The daily programme was as follows:

- 6:00 a.m. Turn out, air bedding, milk and biscuits
- 6:30 a.m. Exercises
- 7:00 a.m. Notices of days activities with demonstrations
- 7:30 a.m. Clean camp
- 7:55 a.m. Parade. Flag break followed by Prayers. Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. Scouting practices
- 12 noon Bathing
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- 1-2:15 p.m. Rest
- 2:30 p.m. Scouting practices

- 5:00 p.m. Tea
- 6:00 p.m. Camp games
- 7:15 p.m. Rub down and change
- 8:00 p.m. Supper
- 8:15 p.m. Campfire yarns. Short exercises (breathing, etc.)
- 9:15 p.m. Prayers
- 9:30 p.m. Turn in. Lights out.

B-P used the Kudu horn (captured in Mataberland in 1896) to rouse the camp and for signals; several shorts notes meant "Rally"; a long call meant "Ready". This horn was sounded by B-P at the opening of the Coming of Age Jamboree in 1929.

The exercises used morning and evening were simple ones rather on the lines of those given in Scouting for Boys.

Bathing included water games and the use of two boats.

The rest after lunch was strictly enforced.

The campfire yarns were mostly of B-P's own adventures, many of them were incorporated in Scouting for Boys. No one recalls that they did any singing other than the Eengonyama Zulu chant.

Eengonyama

Een gonyama.
 Gonyama.
 Invooboo.
 Yah bo.
 Yah bo.
 Invooboo.



The following is B.-P.'s report on the camp:

"The troop of boys was divided up into 'Patrols' of five, the senior boy in each being Patrol Leader. This organization was the secret of our success. Each Patrol Leader

was given full responsibility for the behaviour of his patrol at all times, in camp and in the field. The patrol was the unit of work or play, and each patrol was camped in a separate spot. The boys were put 'on their honour' to carry out orders. Responsibility and competitive rivalry were thus at once established, and a good standard of development was ensured throughout the troop from day to day. The troop was trained progressively in the subjects of scouting. Every night one patrol went on duty as night picket - that is, drew rations of flour, meat, vegetables, tea, etc., and went out to some indicated spot to bivouac for the night. Each boy had his greatcoat and blankets, cooking-pot and matches. On arrival at the spot, fires were lit and suppers cooked, after which sentries were posted and bivouac formed. The picket was scouted by Patrol Leaders of other patrols and myself, at some time before eleven p.m., after which the sentries were withdrawn and picket settled down for the night.

" We found the best way of imparting theoretical instruction was to give it out in short installments with ample illustrative examples when sitting round the camp-fire or otherwise resting, and with demonstrations in the practice hour before breakfast. A formal lecture is apt to bore the boys.

"The practice was then carried out in competitions and schemes.

"For example, take one detail of the subject, 'Observation' - namely tracking.

1. At the camp-fire overnight we would tell the boys some interesting instance of the value of being able to track.
2. Next morning we would teach them to read tracks by making footmarks at different places, and showing how to read them and to deduce their meaning.
3. In the afternoon we would have a game, such as 'deer- stalking', in which one boy went off as the 'deer', with half a dozen tennis balls in his bag. Twenty minutes later four 'hunters' went off after him, following his tracks, each armed with a tennis ball. The deer, after going a mile or two, would hide and endeavour to ambush his hunters, and so get them within range; each hunter struck with his tennis ball was counted gored to death; if, on the other hand, the deer was hit by three of their balls he was killed."

Brownsea Island Today

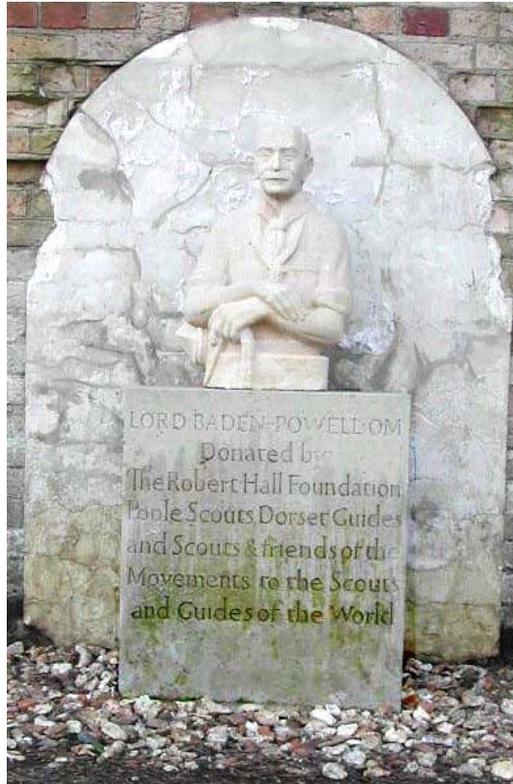
Brownsea Island today is owned and managed by the National Trust and is still used by Scouts and Guides for Camping (the only people allowed to camp on the Island). There 50 acres that have been set aside for camping at the site of the original. The site can accommodate 400 campers with another 24 able to sleep in the South Shore Lodge. There is also an on site trading post which stocks Scout and Guide souvenirs.



Stone commemorating the camp of 1907



The Trading Post and Flag Pole at the Scout Camp on the Island



Bust of BP that can be found outside the Castle Walls on Brownsea Island



In addition is the following quote from the late Terry Bonfield, one of the last two survivors of Lord Baden-Powell's famous experimental camp on Brownsea Island, told his story for the Heritage column of the Bournemouth Evening Echo in 1989, when he was 96.

"I was one of seven boys picked from the Winton Boys Brigade. There were also three from the Poole Brigade and 10 boys who were the sons of Baden-Powell's friends. The Bournemouth boys were taken to Sandbanks on a lorry by Henry Robson, who had a big grocery business at The Triangle. We went to the island on a boat belonging to Harvey's which I think was called the Hyacinth. The other boys went in a bigger boat from Poole Quay. The boys were deliberately chosen from different backgrounds because Baden-Powell wanted to see how they would mix. We didn't know where we were going or what it was all about. It was all very secret because Baden-Powell didn't know whether it would be a success. His idea was to bring youngsters of different nationalities together so that they would learn one another's customs and ways and then there would be no wars. Unfortunately, it hasn't gone that far. Equipment at the first camp - which went on for more than a week - included six bell tents, a marquee and the flag - which had flown over Mafeking. Activities included first aid, life-saving, knot-tying, tracking, and observation skills. In the evening, Baden-Powell told the boys Boer War stories around the camp fire."