

Scouting and Freemasonry

The Baden-Powell Masonic Lodge of Queensland No.505 was consecrated in 1964. Some of the founding members included past Chief Commissioners, Arthur Jackson, Chris Nixon, and Tom Roberts, as well as many others who gave outstanding service to Scouting, Freemasonry and the community.



The symbol of the Baden-Powell Lodge consists of the Scout badge and Masonic Square and Compasses.

In recognition of our Founder, the Lodge have held an event each year close to Founders Day, except for the last couple of years due to COVID19. The Founders Event was held last Sunday at Baden-Powell Park and provided the opportunity to reflect on the links between our organisations and the service Freemasonry members have given to Scouting.

Members of the Baden-Powell Masonic Lodge were responsible for the early development of the Scouts Queensland Heritage Centre and collections, and importantly Scouting in Queensland would not be as strong as it is today, if not for the efforts and support of members of Freemasonry.

In looking at the linkages between Freemasonry and Scouting, the first is the common values between our organisations:

- In Scouting we have our Promise and Law: The Laws being – Respectful - *Be friendly and considerate; and Care for others and the environment; Do What is Right - Be trustworthy, honest and fair; and Use resources wisely; Believe in Myself - Learn from my experiences, and Face challenges with courage.*
- Whereas Freemasonry has its values of – Fairness – Tolerance - Non-discrimination - Inclusiveness - Self-improvement - Giving to others - and Supporting the less fortunate in society.

One of the places that we do record Scouting service by passed Leaders is in the volumes of the Book of Memories which we keep in the Heritage Centre. A search of the 85 entries in the Books found there are 31 who were Freemasons. A significant percentage, and a testament to the linkages between the organisations. Amongst those names are:

Victor Marquis-Kyle whose Scouting name was “Running Stag”. He was our first Quartermaster/later called Scout Shop manager, and he was also the first Field Commissioner from 1925 to 1929.

David Weir whose Scouting name was “Kiwi”. He was an early Field Commissioner and the annual Kiwi Woggle Easter Camp which commenced in 1946, and still held today 74 years later, was named after him.

David Lyall whose Scouting name was “Mao”. He was the Branch Commissioner for Cub Scouts and driving force in the construction of the Pack Holiday Building in 1971 and has been named in his honour.

Arthur Jackson CBE whose Scouting name was “Skipper” and he was Chief Commissioner from 1947 to 1960. During this time, he was responsible for:

- The purchase of Baden-Powell Park and the transition of Leader Training from the Erapah Campsite,
- The purchase and transfer of the Scout Headquarters Office to Baden-Powell House in the Valley, from the very confined quarters in Adelaide Street, and
- The commencement of the Brisbane Gang Show in 1952 which continues annually today.

He was awarded the Silver Wolf, the highest award in Scouting at the time when we were a division of UK Scouting. He was the Foundation Master of the Baden-Powell Masonic Lodge and was appointed a Commander of the British Empire, CBE, in 1959.

Vic Waddell OAM whose Scouting name was “Emu” and he lived by the maxim of “*Service is the price we pay for our place on earth*”. In 1961 he accepted the role of Field Commissioner, travelling around Queensland supporting country Scout Groups for 13 years. He was the Jamboree Secretary for the 8th Australian Jamboree at Jindalee in 1967/68 – the first Australian Jamboree held in Queensland. He was a Leader Trainer on the Training Team. He also served as Branch General Secretary and the Branch Property and Administration Officer. As the Editor of our Scouting magazine and Branch Historian, Vic wrote many articles under the titles of “The Old Timer” and “40 Years Ago”.

At the 13th Australian Jamboree at Collingwood Park, he led a team of fellow Baden-Powell Masonic Lodge members to prepare and mount the Historical display. This team then established the Baden-Powell Scout Museum in the Wheel House which opened in 1984 and continues to operate today as the Scouts Queensland Heritage Centre. He was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia, OAM, in 1992.

Tom Roberts OBE whose Scouting name was “Hathi” served our Chief Commissioner from 1973 to 1981, finishing this role to take on the huge task as Chief Director for the 13th Australian Jamboree at Collingwood Park in 1982/83 – this was the second Australian Jamboree held in Queensland. He then became Area Commissioner for Brisbane North Area, served in many other roles. He followed his great friend Vic when he passed away in 1994 to look after our Scout Heritage. He was awarded the Order of the British Empire, OBE, in 1977.

Bill Roache whose Scouting name was “Badger”, was a member of the Training Team and an Area Commissioner for Brisbane South Area. He was the Queensland Contingent Leader for the 8th Australian Jamboree at Jindalee. He instituted the practice that Branch would provide the tentage and equipment required by Queensland Contingent Troops to National Events, and that this equipment be stored in a building at Baden-Powell Park – this led to the construction of the Branch Equipment Store still in operation today and managed by a team of volunteers (The Thursday Club).

Despite his ill health, in 1992 he accepted the role as the inaugural Branch Commissioner for Conservation, in which he was responsible for the initial development of the Scout Environmental Training Centre at Eprapah.

Jack Edwards whose Scouting name was originally “Brolga”, and then later changed to “Woody” in recognition of his woodworking and Woggle making. Jack served Scouting in many roles over 39 years, initially beginning as Leader with Geebung Scout Group in 1943, a member of the Eprapah Environment Centre Scout Fellowship, and an Honorary Commissioner with Queensland Branch.

Jack was a Scout Leader, Freemason, Woodcraftsman, Organist, and a much-loved character. He is probably best remembered for the Queensland Contingent woggles for many Jamborees that he handcrafted out of mulga wood. He also crafted woggles to raise funds for Eprapah and the Museum, and made Gavels for the Lodge, and Plaques presented to Rover Crews at Founder’s Night.

When you read of the service given by these gentlemen, you can only be inspired by their devotion and hard work, and wonder how they accomplished so much.

Some other examples of the links between Scouting and the Freemasonry include:

- The Baden-Powell Lodge awarding Community Service Pennants to Rover Scout Crews at the annual Founder’s Night,
- A Masonic meeting for Freemasons who are also Leaders is conducted at each Australian Jamboree,
- In 2007 the Baden-Powell Lodge performed a Scout Centenary Pageant in the Grand Hall of the Masonic Memorial Centre, Ann Street Brisbane.
- In 2011 the United Grand Lodge of Queensland gave a donation of \$75,000 to Scouts Queensland for flood and cyclone recovery.
- In 2015, following the Masonic Meeting at the Maryborough Jamboree, members of the Lodge constructed a Gateway for the Chapel at the Aldershot campsite and made other improvements at the site.

In our Heritage Centre, there is a display depicting the ties between Freemasonry and Scouting as well as tributes to many Lodge members including Arthur Jackson, Vic Waddell, Tom Roberts, and Jack Edwards.