

Memories and memorabilia from Visits by Lord Baden-Powell

In 1912, within five years of the commencement of the Scout Movement, Baden-Powell set out on his first world trip, with Queensland included in the itinerary. Upon his arrival in Brisbane by ship, his welcome by a few standard bearers and important looking officials at Toowong appeared an anti-climax, but this was the prelude to a surprise greeting. In response to a bugle blast by "Boodge" Fogarty a short time later, over a thousand boys suddenly appeared from the bushes forming a cordon around Baden-Powell and loudly cheering.

Lord Baden-Powell's second visit to Brisbane was in March 1931 with his wife Lady Olave Baden-Powell, the Chief Guide. There was a rally and displays by more than 3,000 Scouts, Guides, Wolf Cubs and Brownies at the Exhibition Oval. At a signal there was the traditional rush in of Brownies, Wolf Cubs, Guides and Scouts.

During his visit, he left his shoe imprint in cement at the base of the Owl Totem Pole at Erapah Campsite, Victoria Point.

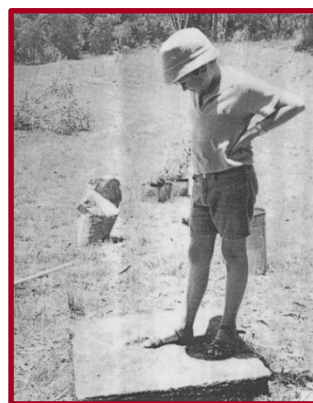


An article in the Brisbane newspaper "The Queenslander" in January 1929 prior to his visit as follows - "It was hoped that the World Chief Scout would send out a cast of his footprint so that it might be permanently recorded in a block of concrete at Erapah. Baden-Powell however, has decided otherwise and his reasons are set forth in a characteristic paragraph in his "Outlook" published in the November "Scouter" - Talking of tracking, when I was in Hungary the novel idea occurred to the scout authorities there of taking an impress of my foot in

concrete, as proving that I had been there. In consequence of this, I have been invited by an Australian scout training centre to send them my footprint; but for one thing, my foot is not specially a thing of beauty to set up as an ornament, nor did I quite like to send it to a spot which my foot has not, as yet, trodden. Otherwise, I should have been proud to have my visit recorded as indubitably as a criminal's thumb-print shows him to have been the guest of his Majesty – in goal. So when next, I go to Australia I shall take with me the most characterful pair of shoes that I can find."

It is understood that the Chief has been forwarded a pressing invitation (a) to visit Erapah in person, and make the approved impression; (b) to send out some personal memento for use at the training centre – even an old billy which he has used."

When Leader Training was relocated from Erapah to Baden-Powell Park, Samford, in 1953, the Footprint was moved to the Park.



A Scout measuring B.P.'s footprint in the Chapel at Baden-Powell Park in 1974.

When the Heritage Centre was established in the Wheel House building at Baden-Powell Park in 1984, the Footprint was moved from the Chapel to be displayed in the Centre.

Lord Baden-Powell's third visit was in December 1934 when he made a brief visit to Brisbane on their way to the Frankstown Jamboree in Victoria. This included an informal gathering with Scouts, Guides, Wolf Cubs and Brownies in Anzac Square where the Chief Scout and Lady Baden-Powell walked along the ranks and talked with the gathered boys and girls.

If you want to know more about our Heritage Program and the history of Scouting in Queensland, email: heritage@scoutsqld.com.au