



Founder's Day Service at Westminster Abbey

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Every year in the UK to mark the occasion of Founder's Day, a special service is held at Westminster Abbey on the first Saturday following the 22nd of February.

Over 3,000 Scouts and Guides convened from various parts of the UK, and national leaders (Chief Scout Chief Guide, and chairmen of both Boards) were present, as well as world representatives Elsbeth Henderson, chairperson of the WAGGGS World Board, and Eduardo Missoni, Secretary General of the World Organization of the Scout Movement.

The theme of the Centenary service was Scouting's past, present and future. National Scout Chaplain (Church of England) the Rev Richard Winslade emphasised the importance of sharing within this frame in a typically informal manner. He said 'The past of the Movement is fantastic and something we can treasure, the present is what we are all involved with and enjoying now and the future can be bigger and better. But the only way to get there is sharing - sharing information between the older Members and younger Members.'

The Founder's grandson, Lord Baden-Powell read from one of Baden-Powell's books, 'Lessons from the Varsity of Life'. His words still resonate today: 'A writer lately described me as "the richest man in the world." That sounds a pretty big order, but when I come to think it out I believe he is not far wrong. A rich man is not necessarily a man with a whole pot of money but a man who is really happy. And I am that.'

The service is an occasion to celebrate not just the Founder, but also the special spirit of unity that exists between the two youth movements. To reflect this, the Chief Scout, Chief Guide, a Beaver and Cub Scout and Rainbow and Brownie Guide all renewed their Promise.

As part of this year's ceremony, for the first time in history the national Scout and Guide flags were replaced by the world flags of the two organizations of the Movement. The flags were blessed and later placed on the B-P memorial in the Abbey (B-P's actual final resting place is in Nyeri, Kenya) where they will be permanently hung, as was previously the case with the national flags.

The World Scout flag flew from the mast of Westminster Abbey, signifying the importance of the day.