



Scouting heritage

by Neil Westaway, AM

The intriguing history of Paul Montford's statuette

Most Victorian Scout leaders and many leaders from other Branches would have seen one of the copies of Paul Montford's bronze statuette of the "Boy Scout" (see photograph).

There are thought to be at least six copies in existence. There are at least four from the original strike and two subsequent copies.

The statuettes are sculptured in solid bronze and have significant historical value.

The model for the original sculpture was thought to be "Scout Harris" of the 1st Toorak Scout Troop.

An article in the Frankston and Somerville Standard, January 11th, 1935 reads –

"The model of a Boy Scout which was made by Mr Paul Montford and presented to the Mornington County Scout Council for erection in its section of the Jamboree was so admired by the World Chief Scout (Lord Baden-Powell) that the Jamboree Council resolved to have a replica made. This has been prepared and will be presented to Lord Baden-Powell by the President of the Victorian Scout's Association (Col. H E Cohen, MLC). He will also present another model to the Boy Scouts Association."

The Jamboree in question was Australia's first National Jamboree held in Frankston, Victoria in 1934/35 and the late Col. Cohen, referred to as President of the Victorian Branch, was previously Chief Commissioner of Victoria in 1919/21.

Before we follow the trail of these pieces let's briefly refer to Paul Montford's background. He was a noted English sculptor who moved to Australia in 1923 to carve the

four buttress groups in granite for the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance. He also made the seated statue in bronze of poet Adam Lindsay Gordon for Melbourne's Spring Street Gardens in 1932.

There are eight examples of his work in the archives of the National Gallery of Victoria in St.Kilda Road, Melbourne but unfortunately, none is currently on display.

We know the whereabouts of four statuettes sculptured at the time of the Frankston Jamboree.

The first copy was obviously presented to B-P and the second given to the Victorian Branch as reported in the newspaper article.

This is probably the copy which stands in the foyer at Victorian Branch Headquarters.

Col. Cohen also had a copy made for himself. We know this because his son, Sir Edward Cohen inherited the piece from his father and it still stands in his home in Toorak.

The fourth piece, the original sculpture which was owned by the Mornington District is probably the statuette standing in the grounds of Gilwell Park, Gembrook, Victoria.

If any of you reading this article know of any other copies made at that time, please let me know.

I arranged to have two later copies made – one for the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd. and one for myself.

The copy for the BHP Co. Ltd. (now called BHP Billiton) was presented to the BHP Board in recognition of the significant support that the company



had given to the Scout Movement throughout Australia over many years.

The presentation was made in 1992 and the statuette (with inscription) is still displayed in the BHP Billiton executive suites in the recently constructed Queen Victoria building in Melbourne.

I would like to acknowledge the research carried out by John and Ann Scholes in the preparation of this article. It was John who found the reference to the statuette in the Frankston and Somerville Standard and Ann, currently Frankston District Historian, who published the details on her website.

Ann's website [www.yican.com.au/1935](http://www.yican.com.au/) contains a detailed story of the 1934/35 Frankston Jamboree.

Neil Westaway,
Chief Commissioner,
Victorian Branch 1979/86