

Scouting heritage

The Scout statue at Gilwell Park has a fascinating history. Rumours of its loss are wrong! It is about to make a spectacular return.

The original



The original: from the 1935 Frankston Jamboree, it has since been displayed in the Training Ground at Gilwell

Refurbished



This year the original statue has been refurbished and will soon return to a new location, the Environmental Centre at Gilwell Park.

The intriguing history of Paul Montford's statuette

By NEIL WESTAWAY

Most Victorian Leaders and many Leaders from other Branches would have seen one of the copies of Paul Montford's bronze statuette of the Boy Scout.

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 11 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 done. This has been prepared and will be presented to Lord Baden-Powell by the President of the Victorian

Scouts 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 Colonel 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

There has been growing interest, and even concern, that the Scout statue at Victoria's Gilwell Park has been missing for almost a year. Good news: it's about to return.

So where is the Scout sculpture?

By **BOB MILLEN**

Last year the Committee of Management of Gilwell Park authorised the repair to the bronze figure known as "The Scout" which had stood on a cairn alongside the Q.M store on the Training Ground.

An earlier search for a repairer had been initiated without success.

As with many great events timing is everything.

Architect and heritage consultant Arthur Andronas, the designer of the New Environment Education Centre (EEC), and former Scout Leader of 6th Box Hill, called on Bill Snoek, the builder of the first stage of the EEC, to undertake the restoration of the statue. Bill is a conservator of wood and metals and worked for the Museum of Victoria for many years.

The repairs included: replacing the staff, attaching the dismembered fore-arm and the neutralising salts in the inner core of the casting, and, of course, a cleanup of the exterior skin.

The cost of the refurbishment is approximately \$5000. Arthur is funding this cost. I trust I speak for all who enjoy the significance of Gilwell Park and its heritage: Thank you, Arthur.

Later this month the statue of "The Scout" will return to Gilwell and be placed in a new location within the Environment Centre located in car park 1.

Check it out. This is one small part of the rich history of Gilwell Park and Scouting in Victoria.

- *Bob Millen is a member of the Gilwell Park committee of management.*



One of the first batch of three copies, this statue is on permanent display at the Victorian Scout Centre at Mount Waverley.

lia 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 the 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 but unfortunately none is currently on display.

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

The first copy was obviously presented to B-P and 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 anyone reading this article knows of any other copies made at that time, please let me know.

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

The copy for 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 through-

out 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 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 who published the details on her website.

Ann's website www.yican.com.au/1935 contains a detailed story of the 1934-35 Frankston Jamboree.

- *Neil Westaway is a former Chief Commissioner of Victoria, Chief Commissioner of Australia, and Chairman of World Scouting.*