

Sir Robert Baden-powell of Gilwell

The degree of Doctor of Laws* was conferred upon Sir Robert Baden-powell of Gilwell by the Chancellor Sir William Cullen KCMG at a graduation ceremony held at 3.00pm on 20 March 1931 at the University.

Sir Robert was the world's Chief Scout and founder of the scout movement, and was visiting Sydney as part of his tour of Australia and New Zealand.

** As there was no provision in the University Act until 1952 for conferring of honorary degrees by the University of Sydney, the University awarded a number of degrees 'ad eundem gradum' - mostly Doctor of Laws - as a mark of special honour. Those who received this award included members of the Royal Family, Governors-General, distinguished soldiers and leaders of industry.*



Lord Baden-Powell (left) leaving the Great Hall with Chancellor Sir William Cullen following the ceremony, *photo, News (Adelaide), 24 March 1931, National Library of Australia.*

Report

Lord Baden-powell said that it seemed almost to be ridiculing the high office of law to bestow on him the degree. "I do not think it is entirely for me," he said, "that this honour has been given. I look upon myself as only one of the vast army of men and women trying to bring the next generation to the idea of a better manhood and womanhood. This will be a great encouragement to them to continue the work they are doing despite many discouragements. After all, service is little good without sacrifice, sacrifice being the height of service. It may be because we have organised a code of laws that I have been honoured."

Lord Baden-powell appealed to the undergraduates of the University to form a scout organisation. "This is a great opportunity to come to the rescue of the Empire," he said, "and not to prepare for war, but to prepare for peace and prosperity and happiness".

From the Kalgoorlie Miner, 23 March 1931