

## Gilwell Fellowship 2018

Every year since 2012, Gilwell Fellows have had an opportunity to get together at Gilwell Park over the Gilwell Reunion weekend. It is always a wonderful week because of the quality of Scouters that are Fellows, including Gill Clay, Baden-Powell's granddaughter. In the beginning years, the members were called *Friends of Gilwell*, but a few years ago, the name was changed to *Gilwell Fellows*.

In order to join, it is a commitment of £2,500 over five years. Young Scouters under the age of 30 can join for an initial deposit of £500, and when they turn 30, they are asked to contribute another £500 per year until they reach £2,500. Scouters can also be recognized for higher levels of contributions. The money that is contributed goes totally to improving Gilwell Park for all to enjoy.

During the event, attendees learn aspects of Scouting in the UK. It is interesting to learn about how their program is growing. One of the reasons that it is growing is because they have chosen as their Chief Scout, Bear Grylls (<https://scouts.org.uk/about-us/organisational-information/chief-scout/> & <https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/article/bear-grylls-scout-essentials>), a person who enjoyed his time as a Scout when he was young and considers his selection as Chief Scout as one of his greatest honors.

As a Gilwell Fellow, I was fortunate to attend the get-together this summer. Before the event began, John Davis, who earned Queen's Scout as a boy but who now lives in the US, organized a trip around London for five of us. Besides myself, the additional three scouters attending were Paco Macias, the President of Mexico Scouting; Pedro Dias, the Chief Scout of Mexico; and Pete Armstrong, a good scouter friend. It was a good day with good friends.

A hobby thing that I do is to help create pins and badges for Scouting. This year, we tentatively decided on a pin for Gilwell Fellows. It is an image of a feature that is located at the right end of the Gilwell White House. At this time, the pin is planned to be gold in color and 9 mm in diameter. The planned pin will likely look like the image to the right.





The Fellows around the bronze buffalo that was presented to Gilwell in 1926 by BSA.

The Gilwell Reunion takes place in the middle of our stay each year, and we enjoy being able to participate in the activities. As with most Scouting events, they end with a great camp fire program.







Visiting Brownsea Island

The last day of our stay was a visit to Brownsea Island. This was the location that Baden-Powell used for his first outing as an experiment to establish Scouting. It is often considered to be the first Scout camp, but Scouting had not been established until 1908. However, they had taken the Scout Promise so the issue is still open. That being said, what some consider to be the first official Scout camp was held at Fourstones near Hexham, Northumberland. Interesting information about the first Scout troop can be found here – <https://timpanogos.wordpress.com/2014/01/24/first-official-boy-scout-troop-january-24-1908/>.



Brownsea commemorative stone for the experimental camp in 1907.

As I said, next year, 2019, will be the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gilwell, and I know it will be a special time. If you are interested in becoming a Gilwell Fellow and you have any questions, let me know. The cost to attend is less at the beginning of the year, so think hard about becoming a Fellow as soon as possible.