

VERA BARCLAY

Co-founder of Cubs

This year The Scout Association is celebrating 100 years since the Cubs section was formally launched. Millions of people have been Cubs and they all owe something to Vera Barclay whose imagination helped develop an iconic and imaginative programme for 8 to 11 year olds.



As Cubs Secretary Vera dealt with a range of queries relating to the new Wolf Cubs programme. One area that caused some concern was what constituted a somersault, as required for the First Star tests. Vera hastened to reassure concerned leaders that it did not constitute "...jumping from a standing position, turning over in the air and coming down to a standing position again."



Vera, born in 1893, had been a Scout leader since 1912 and she understood the disappointment of the boys who were too young to join. In 1914 a pilot scheme was launched for younger boys. Vera, with the support of her sister Angela, started one of the first Wolf Cub Packs.



The 1920 World Scout Jamboree was held at Olympia in London. Displays of Scouting activities were held in the arena and 500 Wolf Cubs took part in a Grand Howl. Vera travelled the country rehearsing the ceremony with different Cub Packs.



During the First World War Vera carried on her Scouting but also worked as a Red Cross Nurse. In June 1916 she attended the first Cubmaster's Conference and a few weeks later received a letter that would change her life.

Shortly after this Vera left her role at Scout HQ but she was soon volunteering with Cub Packs both in the UK and France. She also wrote a large number of books full of ideas of Cubs and their leaders.

The start of a new adventure

Vera was offered a job at Scout Headquarters, she was the first member of staff dedicated to working with Cubs. Alongside the Chief Scout and Founder, Robert Baden-Powell, she developed the Wolf Cub Handbook. Baden-Powell drew the illustrations as he had done for *Scouting for Boys*.

Vera in Norfolk

As an older lady Vera came to live in North Norfolk with her niece Betty and died in Sheringham in 1989 where she is buried in the local cemetery. In acknowledgement of her great contribution to the Scout Movement a plaque was added to her grave in August 2016.

