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Date: Monday, 06 September 2004

Peter Duncan - The new leader of the Pack

Actor and TV action man Peter Duncan was yesterday officially appointed the new Chief Scout, taking on the challenge to lead the UK's largest co-educational youth charity.

Over 4000 Scouts aged 6-25 and adult volunteers attended the celebrations to commemorate this historic event. The festivities took place at the home of Scouting at Gilwell Park, The Scout Association's headquarters and international campsite in Chingford, North East London. The highlight of the day was Peter's investiture when he renewed his Scout Promise, a commitment made by all members of the Movement. During the ceremony Peter was presented with Baden-Powell's original Silver Wolf. This badge of office has been worn by every Chief Scout since Baden-Powell.

Following a picnic in his honour, Peter visited the "EuroJam Live!" internet site and learnt about Scouting throughout Europe and the activities that 20,000 Scouts and Guides from across Europe will be doing at the European Scout Jamboree – EuroJam – next summer at Hylands Park, Chelmsford.

Peter said "The funny thing is, I've lived like a Scout all my life - I just haven't realised it until now. Today I have seen activities which I have participated in over the years, and others I am keen to find out more about. Scouting offers so many opportunities for young people. I am proud to be a part of it".

Peter Duncan is famous for his round-the-world expeditions, as well as presenting Blue Peter and Duncan Dares in the 1980's. He is delighted to be taking on this role following in the steps of only eight others who have held the role of Chief Scout since Baden-Powell was declared the first Chief Scout.

Having recently backpacked around China with his family, and camped in Jordan with his son, Peter is looking forward to 2007 which will see a year long programme of events around the world to celebrate Scouting's Centenary. The highlight will be the largest ever World Scout Jamboree which will see 40,000 Scouts from almost every country in the world being brought together to live and work in peace at Hylands Park, Chelmsford.

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Editor's Notes:

- Scouting is the largest co-educational youth movement in the UK with a total of 476,992 members (March 2002 figures)
- Worldwide, there are well over 28 million members in over 216 Countries. Two thirds of the membership lives in developing Countries.
- The Aim of the Association is "To promote the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potential as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities.
- Scouting in West Lancashire has a membership of just under 10,000 members in the following 8 Districts: Chorley, Blackpool, Preston, Ormskirk, South Ribble, Fylde, Wyre and Lonsdale.
- In the last year 20,000 young people travelled abroad with Scouts to visit over 80 countries around the world, including El Salvador, Romania, Thailand and Zambia. In these countries they took part in a wide range of challenging and community based projects such as building clinics, providing basic education and climbing mountains
- In 2007 the UK will host the World Scout Jamboree for 40,000 young people from almost every Country in the world. This event has more participants than the Olympics & will be one of the many events to mark Scouting's Centenary!
- Next summer the UK will host EuroJam – for 20,000 Scouts from across Europe
- EuroJam Live! Can be found at www.eurojamlive.org

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