

Scout group and district history research support

The Scout Heritage Service are happy to support groups with finding information about their history. Learning where you've come from and about your past can be really important in guiding you for the future, especially if your group or district is celebrating a big anniversary. It can be a big challenge starting from scratch, so we've created a help sheet for you with key things you can do, as well as what the Heritage Service can provide.

We can't always provide all the answers, as some information wasn't recorded and we aren't able to share personal data for those who may still be alive due to GDPR. For further details visit [Heritage Enquiries Service | Scouts](#).

Recommended starting points:

- What is at your local Headquarters that might help you? Badges, photos, commemorations, old flags, trophies etc.
- Is there anyone you can ask locally? A district official, former group leaders, former members? Online community pages are a great way to get stories of what it was like to be a scout in the past.
- Newspaper archives - awards and big events were often reported on locally
- If your area has a local historical society or museum, ask if they hold anything on your group.
- Get young people involved - what do they want to know?

What the Heritage Service can provide:

- **HQ registration forms** - groups from 1928, Scout Troop and Cub Pack registration forms from 1919. Personal data will be redacted from forms post 1945.
- **District records** - lists (c1950-1975) recording groups in the district, and sections within the group.
- **County byelaws** - Lists the registration of a district and the groups within it at formation or times of change. Personal data will be redacted from forms post 1945.
- **Publications** - Mentions of group in Scouting Magazine, The Scouter and Headquarters Gazette
- **Volunteer appointments and warrants** - listed up to around 1925
- **The development of Scouting** - factsheets on Scouting for each decade to provide an overview of what it was like to be a Scout at this time.
- **Group and district badges** - from the early days of scouts to the 1980's as until this point local badges used to be approved by HQ and a reference copy was preserved.
- **Group and district histories** - copies of booklets and leaflets which have previously been created.

It isn't always possible to find an example of each item on this list, but we will share whatever we do find.

To access the information, email your group name, district, and county to heritage@scouts.org.uk

Sharing your group or districts' story

Once you've found out about your history, share it for others to learn, and for future leaders and young people!

Ways to do this...

- **Create a display at your Scout Headquarters**

You could create a permanent display board somewhere, or if you're unable to do this you could make a portable one which you can bring out for events and sessions.

Why not get your young people involved in designing?

- **Booklet**

You could compile all the information you have found into a history booklet which you could sell, or distribute to people within your group (remember to keep a few for the future!)

You could get a young person to write some of the content!

- **Webpage**

If you have a group/district website, you could add in a webpage where you can put this information. This way means you can update it more frequently and easily.

Any tech whizzes in your sections? A young person could help you get started.

- **Social media**

Why not create a social media series? You could share bits of information at a time, and add to it as time goes on.

Ask young people to take or edit photos using different software.

Things to consider...

When creating public content, make sure you have the right photo permissions from young people and adults.

If someone doesn't want their image used, take it down when asked.

If you want to share personal details (e.g. names of Award Holders in your group), make sure you are adhering to GDPR guidelines and asking for permission.

Sharing your group or districts' story

Links to the programme

If you get young people involved it could go towards a variety of badges for them! This is more tailored to the older sections, but younger sections can still get involved by learning about the past and creating something for your display to show what Scouts are up to today.



UK Scouts in the 1900s

Chief Scout	Robert Baden-Powell
Sections	Scouts
Branches	Land Scouts
Membership	1909 - 54914

Key moments

- 1907** Robert Baden-Powell, renowned Boer War veteran, hosts an experimental camp on Brownsea Island for 20 boys to test his ideas for his new book.
- 1908** Scouting for Boys is published in 6 fortnightly parts to make it more affordable. It's intended to be used by existing youth organisations, but Scout Patrols begin appearing all over the country.
- 1909** A Rally is hosted at Crystal Palace, amongst attendees are patrols of Girl Scouts. The idea is formed for Girl Guides.

Story spotlight

After the success of his book, and the number of scout patrols forming all over the country, Robert Baden-Powell announces the formation of the Boy Scout Movement in Birkenhead.



Attendees of the Brownsea Island camp were given special badges to wear, a symbol based on badges B-P gave his army Scouts in India. This one was drawn by camp attendee Terry Bonfield from memory, many years later.



In the first edition of Scouting for Boys in 1908 the symbol is described as an arrowhead. After criticisms the symbol was too militaristic, it is renamed after the heraldic fleur de lis.



Helping others in need has always been part of the programme. In 1908 this badge was called the Ambulance badge.



In 1909, special additions were made to it to the design to make it unique to Scouts. This included the addition of the two stars. The ten points of the stars later came to represent the ten parts of the Scout Law. In the UK, there were only 9 laws until 1911.

UK Scouts in the 1910s

Chief Scout Robert Baden-Powell

Sections Wolf Cubs
Scouts
Rover Scouts

Branches Land Scouts
Sea Scouts

Membership 1910– 107986
1919– 218628

Key moments

- 1914** A pilot for younger boys aged 8-11 is trialled, due to demand for Scouting
- 1916** Wolf Cubs is launched, many of its early leaders and pioneers are women.
- 1919** Gilwell Park is purchased by William de Bois MacLaren as a campsite and training centre for Scouts and Leaders.

Story spotlight

Many Scouts and their leaders joined up during the First World War, and unfortunately, they didn't all return. One such brave Scout was Jack Cornwell who fought in the Battle of Jutland. His ship was badly damaged, with many already dead but Jack remained at one of the ships guns, badly wounded and exposed to the enemy. He died of his wounds shortly after returning, but his heroism and bravery became nationwide news. In his honour, B-P created the Cornwell Award in his memory, for scouts performing acts of bravery and undergoing suffering in a heroic manner.

Only a handful of these are given out each year.



Camping has always been a popular Scout activity. The first camping badge was launched in 1917.

An example of one of the first Wolf Cub badges is the house orderly, requirements include washing up, making the bed, and making a good cup of tea.

Scouts across the country do their bit to help the war effort. Some were messengers between important locations like government offices or police buildings, some worked on farms, some guarded railway junctions and telephone wires. War Service entitled the Scout to wear a badge denoting the number of days service.

Another way in which Scouts helped the war effort was as coast watchers. The very first Cornwell Award was given to a coast watching Scout, Arthur Shephard who carried rockets along a dangerous coastline.

UK Scouts in the 1920s

Chief Scout Robert Baden-Powell

Sections Wolf Cubs
Scouts
Rover Scouts

Branches Land Scouts
Sea Scouts

Membership 1920 - 233,273
1929 - 397,648

Key moment

- 1920** First World Scout Jamboree
- 1921** First Cub volunteers training course at Gilwell
- 1922** Woggles start to be worn as part of the uniform
- 1924-** Specialist support is launched for
- 1926** Scouts with disabilities

Story spotlight

In 1929, Scouting celebrated its 21st birthday at the 'coming of age' World Scout Jamboree at Arrowse Park, Birkenhead, UK. After a global fundraising campaign the Scout movement purchased the Founder a caravan (known as Eccles), a Rolls Royce (nicknamed Jam Roll) and a painting of himself by David Jagger. He'd only asked for a pair of braces which is was gifted by some Irish Scouts.



There was no badge for the 1920 World Scout Jamboree. This home made badge is from Baden-Powell's camp blanket.



The 1924 World Scout Jamboree was the first to have a participant badge, each one was numbered.



The badge of the 1929 World Scout Jamboree shows an arrow, taken from the venue name Arrowse Park.



In 1928 the design of Wolf Cub and Scout badges changed adding "Boy Scouts" to the border. These early badges were made from felt. In 1929 the design changed to a green ribbon with the badge image in the middle.



Wolf Cub volunteers who attended early training courses were presented with a replica wolf fang. This was usually carved from bone.

UK Scouts in the 1930s

Chief Scout	Robert Baden-Powell
Sections	Wolf Cubs Scouts Rover Scouts
Branches	Land Scouts Sea Scouts
Membership	1930 - 438098 1938—464163 (no census in 1939 due to war)

Key moment

- 1932** First Scout Gang Show is held to raise money for a swimming pool at Downe Campsite.
- 1934** First National Scout Service for King's Scouts is held at Windsor Castle.
- 1939** At the outbreak of the Second World War Scouts help with the evacuation of children from cities to the country.

Story spotlight

In the 1937 over 4,000 refugees from the Spanish Civil War arrived in the UK. A camp was set up but disease and lack of equipment soon became a problem. Scout volunteers came to help run it as they knew how to organise large scale camps. In 1938-1939 a scheme called Kindertransport was set up to rescue Jewish children from Nazi controlled countries. Baden-Powell drew this thank you card for Scouts who helped.



The 1933 World Scout Jamboree was held in Hungary.



The 1937 World Scout Jamboree was the last attended by Robert Baden-Powell before he retired to Kenya the following year.



In 1934 the design of Wolf Cub and Scout badges changes again. They change back to triangular and circular designs with bound edges making them more durable.



Scouts taking part in the first King's Scout Parade at Windsor Castle.

UK Scouts in the 1940s

Chief Scouts	Robert Baden-Powell Lord Somers Lord Rowallan
Sections	Wolf Cubs Scouts Senior Scouts (from 1946) Rover Scouts
Branches	Land Scouts Sea Scouts Air Scouts (from 1941)
Membership	1941 - 305760 (no census in 1940 due to war) 1949 - 473216

Key moments

- 1941** Robert Baden-Powell dies in Kenya
- 1941** Air Scout branch is launched
- 1948** Due to budget restrictions Scouts help at the London Olympics
- 1949** The Bob-a-job fundraising campaign is launched.

Story spotlight

From 6 June 1943 - 16 August 1945 a small group of Allied soldiers in Changi Prison, Singapore bravely carried on Scouting. They carefully handmade scarves, badges and wristbands using sleeves of their uniform and unpicking the thread from food sacks or belts. They recorded the instructions in a logbook. The Rover Crew gave the prisoners a focus, a routine and something to look forward to. They held meetings teaching each other skills they had learnt as Scouts. Some even completed their Wood Badge theory courses which were later honoured by Gilwell Park. Not all of the Crew had been Scouts before but many later became members in their home countries.



The first post war World Scout Jamboree was known as the Peace Jamboree. It was held in Moisson on the banks of the River Seine.



During the Second World War badges were printed rather than sewn to help save resources needed for the war effort.



Senior Scouts for 15-18 year olds was piloted from 1942 and then launched in 1946 as part of a scheme to rebuild Scouting after the Second World War.



All Scout sections were asked to help on the Home Front during the Second World War. From fire spotting to collecting fruit everyone got involved. Those who helped were awarded this National Service badge to wear on their uniform.

UK Scouts in the 1950s

Chief Scouts Lord Rowallan
Sir Charles Maclean

Sections Wolf Cubs
Scouts
Senior Scouts
Rover Scouts

Branches Land Scouts
Sea Scouts
Air Scouts

Membership 1950 - 471364
1959 - 571402

Key moments

- 1953** 4,000 Scout volunteers sell 700,000 programmes for the coronation of HM Queen Elizabeth II.
- 1957** The first Jamboree on the Air (JOTA) is held alongside the 9th World Scout Jamboree, Rover Moot and Scout volunteer Indaba enabling more Scouts around the world to participate.

Story spotlight

In April 1953 the official Scout souvenir coronation pennant was launched.



As well as selling coronation programmes 1,100 Scouts supported crowds along the procession route. Rover Scouts and Queen's or King's Scouts welcomed attendees as they entered Westminster Abbey.



The 1951 World Scout Jamboree badge shows an unusual locally made harp which is held in the mouth. It is often played by Austrian shepherds.



The 1955 World Scout Jamboree in Canada was the first held outside Europe and the first the UK contingent travelled by air to reach.



Normally, World Scout Jamborees are held every 4 years, however an extra was held in 1957 due to the special anniversaries of the Brownsea Island camp and birth of Baden-Powell.



The 1959 World Scout Jamboree was the first held in Asia. The badge shows a traditional Philippine hat, a salakot.



The name on the Senior Scout Badge is changed to reflect the name of the section.

UK Scouts in the 1960s

Chief Scout	Sir Charles Maclean	
Sections	Wolf Cubs	Cub Scouts
	Scouts	Scouts
	Senior Scouts	Venture Scouts
	Rover Scouts	
Branches	Land Scouts	
	Sea Scouts	
	Air Scouts	
Membership	1960– 588396	
	1969—534625	

Key moments

- 1961** Baden-Powell House, Kensington, is opened by HM Queen Elizabeth II. The building provided a hostel for Scouts and Guides
- 1964** Sir Charles Maclean, recruits 24 Scout volunteers aged under 45 to conduct a review of the Movement and create a plan to take Scouts into the 1970s.

Story spotlight

The Advance Party Report changes are implemented in 1967. Wolf Cubs become Cubs, and programme steers away from The Jungle Book. For Scouts, a standard green shirt is introduced, along with new awards. Senior Scouts and Rover Scouts become Venture Scouts, with new awards and a beige uniform, also worn by leaders with a tie. Headwear is used for ceremonial occasions, and female leaders could wear green skirts/shirts or dresses.



The official badge for the 1963 World Scout Jamboree was made of metal. The only time this has been the case.



The 1967 World Scout Jamboree badge shows the Rocky Mountains. It was the first World Scout Jamboree hosted by the USA.



In 1967, the new programme, means new badges in a new style. For the first (and only) time, badges are produced in nylon. This only lasted a few years, before it was discovered they melted when ironed!



A new membership badge for each section and leaders is introduced. The background colour denotes sections: Red for Cubs, Green for Scouts, Brown for Venture Scouts and Leaders.



UK Scouts in the 1970s

Chief Scout	Charles MacLean William Gladstone
Sections	Cub Scouts Scouts Venture Scouts
Branches	Land Scouts Sea Scouts Air Scouts
Membership	1970– 539440 1979-637421

Key moments

- 1970** New versions of the Scout Promise are introduced for Scouts of various faiths and non UK citizens.
- 1972** For the first time since 1910, girls are welcomed to the movement as Venture Scouts
- 1974** The last London Gang Show is performed. Since the 1930's Ralph Reader had been writing and putting on Scout Gang Shows, a tradition that continues today.
- 1977** Olave Baden-Powell, wife of the founder and World Chief Guide passes away.

Story spotlight

In 1972, the movement make the choice to introduce the first girls to youth sections of scouts for over 60 years. Female venture

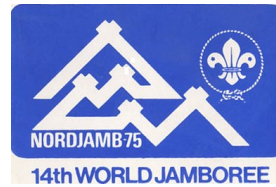


Set in the foothills of Mount Fuji, the 1971 jamboree was memorable for many reasons, including Typhoon Oliver! UK Scouts, well versed in wet weather camping, helped their neighbours in the waterlogged 800 acre campsite.

Nordjam was hosted as a cooperation between the five Nordic countries who hosted. The jamboree was opened by King Olav V, with Scouts from 94 countries in attendance.

The 1979 World Scout Jamboree was due to be hosted in Iran, however after its cancellation, 1979 becomes 'World Jamboree Year' with various international adventures held across the world.

In 1972, a World Membership Badge is introduced by the World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM) to be worn by every Scout around the world, showing our global unity.



UK Scouts in the 1980s

Chief Scout	William Gladstone Michael Walsh Garth Morrison
Sections	Beaver Scouts Cub Scouts Scouts Venture Scouts
Branches	Land Scouts Sea Scouts Air Scouts
Membership	1980– 640666 1989–676219 (highest recorded)

Key moments

- 1981** The first Muslim Scout Group, 25th Kensington (Ismaili) opens
- 1984** A pilot for under 8 Scouting provision is trialled around the country
- 1986** Beaver Scouts for 6-8 year olds is formally launched

Story spotlight

Northern Ireland had been successfully running Beavers since the 1960s, and in the 1980s the rest of the movement followed suit. Beaver Scouts encourage Fun and Friends, learning about the world outdoors. They wear a



The theme of the 15th World Scout Jamboree was “The Spirit Lives On”, felt by the 15,000 scouts in the form of warm hospitality from the hosts.



The 1987/88 jamboree was the first time UK Ranger Guides attended a World Scout Jamboree, along with 11 members of the Baden-Powell family.



Originally, Beavers have one badge, worn on the point of a turquoise scarf.



Collective awards are introduced for Cubs in the form of Camper and Entertainer for sixes to work together for a goal.



1982 celebrated 75 years of Scouts. Chief Scout Michael Walsh, who was appointed earlier that year, attended celebrations and events all over the country.

UK Scouts in the 1990s

Chief Scout	Garth Morrison George Purdy
Sections	Beaver Scouts Cub Scouts Scouts Venture Scouts
Branches	Land Scouts Sea Scouts Air Scouts
Membership	1990– 671077 1999-545573

Key moments

- 1990** Scouts go for a Million, raising money and completing in challenges to earn a fully paid place at the 1991 World Scout Jamboree.
- 1992** Scout Groups can choose to become co-educational.
- 1997** The first official Jamboree on the Internet is run alongside Jamboree on the Air.

Story spotlight

To enable progression for girls in Scouts, all sections in the group have to adopt the change. By 1995, there are over 23,000 girls in the movement, accounting for 4.4% overall.



The 1991 World Scout Jamboree in Korea was in Mount Sorak National Park, not far from the disputed border with North Korea. The UK brought a replica Brownsea Island camp to re-enact the 1907 experimental camp



The theme for the 1995 World Scout Jamboree was “the future starts today” marked by a global development village, where scouts could learn about other cultures.



Chile becomes the first Latin American country to host a jamboree, where scouts provided service to local villages and learned about Chilean life.



Progressive Awards are introduced for different age groups within the Scout section to provide age relevant challenges.

UK Scouts in the 2000s

Chief Scout	George Purdy Peter Duncan Bear Grylls
Sections	Beaver Scouts Cub Scouts Scouts Explorer Scouts Network Scouts
Branches	Land Scouts Sea Scouts Air Scouts
Membership	2000-508104 2009-479802

Key moments

- 2001** A new brand, programme, and uniform is launched to bring Scouts into the 21st Century.
- 2007** In 2007 Scouting becomes fully co-educational. 2007 also marks the Centenary of Scouting with a jamboree in the UK.

Story spotlight

The new uniform sees Beavers in turquoise jumpers, Cub jumpers move to soft cotton, and more modern shirts are introduced for older sections and leaders. We say goodbye to mushroom office trousers for navy activity wear.



'Share our World, Share our Cultures', promoting peace and international friendship through challenging activities, thought provoking cultural experiences and simply being together, brought Scouts together in Thailand over the festive period.



The UK hosts the 21st World Scout Jamboree in Essex at Hylands Park. Gilwell Park provides offsite activities for the event. Special guests include Prince William and the Association's president, the Duke of Kent.



Challenge awards are introduced in Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts, giving a more rounded programme with a variety of themes.



The Chief Scouts Award is introduced for each section, from Bronze to Diamond.



The culmination of youth achievement remains the Queens Scout Award, now with a fresh new look and modern requirements.

Scouting in the 2010s

Chief Scout Bear Grylls

Sections Beaver Scouts
Cub Scouts
Scouts
Explorer Scouts
Network Scouts

Branches Land Scouts
Sea Scouts
Air Scouts

Membership 2010– 499922
2019-638358

Key moments

- 2014** The first modest dress item of Scout wear is introduced.
- 2015** Hannah Kentish is announced as the first UK Youth Commissioner
- 2018** A new brand and the #skillsforlife strategy is introduced
- 2019** Gilwell Park celebrates its 100th anniversary as the home of Scouting

Story spotlight

The 100th Anniversary of Gilwell Park is marked by a special brand and a Heritage display onsite, showing the history of Scouts at Gilwell.



The 2011 World Scout Jamboree is hosted in Sweden with the theme of “simply Scouting” it sees over 40,000 attend.

In 2015, the wide range of activities provided included a Peace Programme with the opportunity to visit Hiroshima Peace memorial Park , as well as a science village.

The 24th World Scout jamboree at Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia, was jointly hosted by the USA, Canada, and Mexico.

More modern and relevant activity and staged badges are introduced, such as Money Skills for Beavers and Cubs

The challenge awards are updated for each section, providing new and exciting things to learn about.

The Young Leader Award is updated with a new emblem, an acorn and oak leaves, alluding to the growth

UK Scouts in the 2020s

Chief Scout	Bear Grylls Dwayne Fields
Sections	Squirrel Scouts Beaver Scouts Cub Scouts Scouts Explorer Scouts Network Scouts
Branches	Land Scouts Sea Scouts Air Scouts
Membership	2020– 636591

Key moments

- 2020** Over 74 million minutes of Scouting are delivered online due to the COVID-19 Pandemic
- 2021** After a pilot starting in 2019, Squirrel Scouts is launched for 4 and 5 year olds.
- 2022** Scouts play a major part in the Lying in State of HM Queen Elizabeth II
- 2024** After 15 years as Chief Scout, Bear Grylls steps down. Dwayne Fields becomes the next Chief Scout

Story spotlight

Scouts work day and night to manage The Queue to see HM Queen Elizabeth Lying in State. Scouts work with local foodbanks to donate the mountains of food from visitors.



The 25th World Scout Jamboree is hosted at Saemangeum in Korea. Due to a number of issues onsite and bad weather, the site was evacuated and the jamboree carried on in Seoul.



Squirrel Scouts work towards their Chief Scouts Acorn Award, by earning challenge badges such as the All Together Award.



After over 70 years as the Queen's Scout Award, the top award for young people is renamed and redesigned as the King's Scout Award.



The Earth Tribe is launched for all sections to help our planet. Young people can become champions for nature, tide turners, or go solar to take action and make change.



A new World Membership badge is introduced in 2024, the first change to the badge since its inception in the 1970's, along with it comes a new refreshed World Scouting Brand.