

What Are Beaver Scouts?

In October 1982, The Scout Association introduced 'Beavers' for 6 and 7 year old boys in response to a growing demand within the Movement for such an optional activity to be available at the discretion of Scout Groups.

Provision for this age range had, in fact, existed for some years in a number of countries. Beavers started in Northern Ireland some 15 years earlier and, later, there were similar approaches in the Republic of Ireland, Australia, Canada and New Zealand and in some European countries. Some informal projects also developed in places in Scotland and England.

Initially, Beavers were not full Members of the Movement. That did not happen until April 1986 when they became a recognised training Section and took the title of Beaver Scouts. In 1991, girls were admitted to the Beaver Scouts for the first time. The Beaver Scout Programme was extensively overhauled in 1995.

In the United Kingdom, Beaver Scouts wear a grey sweatshirt, a turquoise or Group scarf, with a maroon plastic woggle to hold it in place. Their Promise, which is appropriate for the age range, is, - 'I promise to do my best to be kind and helpful and to love God'.

Beaver Scouts meet in 'Colonies', usually once a week. Beaver Scouts have

the opportunity to work in a variety of groupings, sometimes called Lodges. The Colony normally comprises a maximum membership of 24. However to meet local short or long term circumstances, this number may be increased with the agreement of the Executive Committee and the District Commissioner. The Beaver Scout Motto is 'Fun & Friends' which describes the ethos of the section.

The Beaver Scout programme and activities are based on four Activity areas, these are:

Beaver Scouts Learn about themselves- exploring their feelings and developing good habits of health and personal safety.

Beaver Scouts get to know people- Finding out about people in their family, the family of Scouting, and the local community and wider world.

Beaver Scouts explore- discovering the exciting world of science, nature and technology, exploring the natural and man- made world

Beaver Scouts care- growing in their love of god and responding to the needs of others, the local community and the wider world.

A number of badges are available for the Beaver Scouts to recognise their progress through the Colony. These are as follows:

- 🦫 **The Beaver Scout Membership Badge-** to be awarded at a Promise ceremony after four to six weeks in the Colony.
- 🦫 **The Beaver Scout Badges-** there are two Beaver Scout Badges issued by the Beaver Scout Leader after consecutive periods of six to eight months of taking part in an active and balanced Colony programme.
- 🦫 **The Beaver Scout Challenge-** this is an optional award for individual Beaver Scouts. If attempted, the Challenge should be completed during the last few months in the Colony. It is based on the four Activity Areas.
- 🦫 **The Cub Scout Membership Award-** Beaver Scouts should begin working for the Cub Scout Membership Award between four and six weeks before transferring into the Cub Scout Pack.

The elements of their activities do, indeed, aim towards having fun and making friends and there is an exciting spicing of adventure and achievement. The project approach is also used but with every encouragement for the individual to make their own personal contribution.

The 'Scouts help others' principle of the Scout Movement's ethos is readily accepted by boys and girls of Beaver Scout age so that appropriate community service is possible right from the start.

Beaver Scout Leaders are appointed under the Policy, Organisation and Rules of the Association and are men and women between the ages of 20 and 65 who are in sympathy with the aims of Scouting. Assistant Leaders may be appointed from the age of 18. Parents and Helpers are a valuable asset to the running of a successful Beaver Scout Colony.

In April 1986, there were already over 60,000 Beaver Scouts in the United Kingdom and in the 1997 Census, there were 133,245.