

Scouting Facts: Botswana



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Scouting started in Botswana in 1931 in the form of "Pathfinders" and it was administered by South African Headquarters. In 1953 Botswana became an Overseas Branch of The Scout Association until 1968 when the Botswana Scout Association



became a direct member of the World Scout Conference.

Few Scout Groups have their own headquarters and most of them met on the school grounds or under trees in the village. Recently Scouts, helped by Cubs, moulded hundreds of thousands of bricks to build a school and community centre.

The main source of income in Botswana is agriculture and many Troops have their own vegetable gardens and part of their training includes how to care for cattle, goats and sheep. There is a healthy cattle industry at the present time after many years of good rains - "Pula" (rain) is of such importance (as the country is mainly deserts) that it is the President's greeting to the people, who likewise reply "Pula". The President is also the Chief Scout.

Recently the discovery of the second largest diamond mine in the world means that more people are turning to industry.

The Association owns a large national campsite, Aedume Park, about 7 km. from the capital of Gaborone and as soon as funds are available the site will be developed into a training and community development centre.

One of the German Associations the Deutsche Pfadfinderschaft Sankt Georg (D.S.P.G.) are financing and co-operating with Botswana in community development, including a seminar and a full-time trainer skilled in carpentry and construction.

Two large problems Botswana Scouting faces are the shortage of Leaders and the vastness of the country. The first is that traditionally a man does not concern himself with children until they are about 14 years old, so that most of the Leaders are women, teachers and clergymen. The second problem makes it difficult for National Headquarters to know exactly what is happening at local level, especially as the country is thinly populated.

The training programme was based on that of the United Kingdom but this has now been adapted to the needs of the country. Scouts in Botswana have no real need for map and compass work for they learn to find their way by the sun and stars at a very young age, and how to light fires and cook are among the first things a young child learns.

The Scout Association

Glwell Park Chingford London E4 7QW Tel + 44 (0)20 8433 7100 Fax + 44 (0)20 8433 7103 email info.centre@scouts.org.uk www.scouts.org.uk

There are three sections, Cubs, Scouts and Senior Scouts. The uniform for all three sections consist of a Khaki shirt and shorts or trousers; with a cap for the Cubs and a green beret for the Scouts and Leaders.

W1N 9AE

The Commonwealth Institute
Kensington High Street
London W8 6NQ

Motto:

Nna oi paakoulse - (Be prepared)

Promise:

"On my honour I promise that I will do my best:

To do my duty to God and my country,

To help other people, To keep the Scout Law"

Scout Law:

This is exactly the same as that in use in the United Kingdom.

The 1979 Census shows an approximate number of 10,800 members in the Movement in Botswana, which means that over the past five years numbers have almost doubled.

Scouting in Botswana has a reputation for a high standard and has contributed considerably to Youth affairs in the country; it is noteworthy for its community self-help projects and rural area activities; another feature worth recording is the long adventurous expeditions into the desert but here great care must be taken in choosing a route because of lions and elephants.

General information on the country may be obtained from:

Botswana High Commission

6 Stratford Place

London