

The Scout 5 Unit





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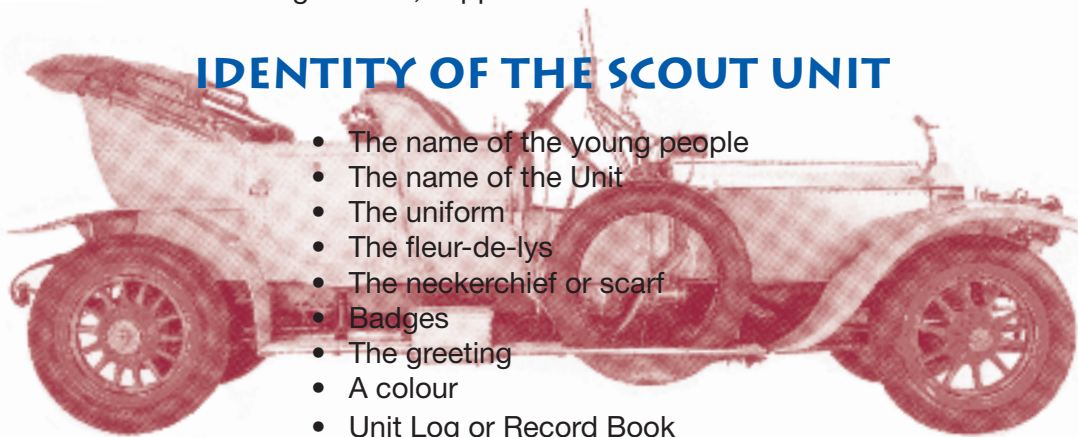
THE NATURE OF THE SCOUT UNIT

- The Scout Unit supports the Patrol System
- The Scout Unit is the guardian of the mission
- The Scout Unit is a community moving forward towards a shared vision
- The Scout Unit is a space where the Patrols interact
- The Scout Unit ideally consists of
 - 4 Patrols and 32 young people
 - Young people from 11 to 15, depending on individual growth rates
 - Units can be mixed or single-sex

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SCOUT UNIT

- As well as the Patrols, the Unit structure comprises three other bodies
- The Unit Assembly makes basic rules and decides on Unit objectives and activities
- The Unit Council organizes the operations and conducts training
- The Team of Adult Leaders provides educational guidance, support and assessment

IDENTITY OF THE SCOUT UNIT



- The name of the young people
- The name of the Unit
- The uniform
- The fleur-de-lys
- The neckerchief or scarf
- Badges
- The greeting
- A colour
- Unit Log or Record Book



THE NATURE OF THE SCOUT UNIT

THE SCOUT UNIT SUPPORTS THE PATROL SYSTEM



The Scout Method is an educational approach which places trust in the young people and puts confidence in their self-

education. In the Scout Section, this trust is manifested in the use of the Patrol System, which encourages and provides the conditions for the dynamics of the peer group to operate as a learning community.

Why do we need a Scout Unit if the Patrols can operate on their own?



Because a Patrol requires a minimum of organization behind it to fulfil its dual role as a peer group and as a learning community.



Because Patrols need a space in which to interact with other Patrols, which serve as models and measures of their own performance.



Because the leaders of the small groups need an educational environment in which to learn leadership.



Because the method requires an environment in which the stimulating presence of the adult is perceived, without this interfering "within" the Patrol.



Because the Patrols need a safe territory in which to act, to reduce the potential risks of the system to a minimum.

The first reason for having a Scout Unit is therefore to oversee the free and full operation of the Patrol System. The Patrol is the learning community and the Scout Unit is its support organization.

The Unit must be careful to handle this responsibility without stepping beyond the bounds of its role. The Unit must not invade the territory of the Patrols or create conditions which directly or indirectly inhibit, limit or invalidate them.



THE SCOUT UNIT IS THE GUARDIAN OF THE MISSION



The *mission*, the “why”, is equivalent to the purpose of Scouting. It is shared by Scouts world-over and is expressed in the educational proposal of our Association.

The 35th World Scout Conference, held in Durban, South Africa, in July 1999, established that our mission is to contribute to the education of young people through a value system based on the spiritual, social and personal principles expressed in our Promise and Law, to help build a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society. This mission is achieved through the Scout Method, which makes each individual the principal agent in his or her development as a self-reliant, supportive, responsible and committed person.

What is the role of the Scout Unit with regard to the mission?

All those who participate in Scouting and all its structures at local, national or world level are linked to each other and bound by the mission. But the specific way in which it involves young people of 11 to 15 is through the Scout Unit. The Scout Unit is responsible for fully applying all the elements of the Method in a balanced way, in other words for ensuring that the young people experience that atmosphere we have called *group life*.

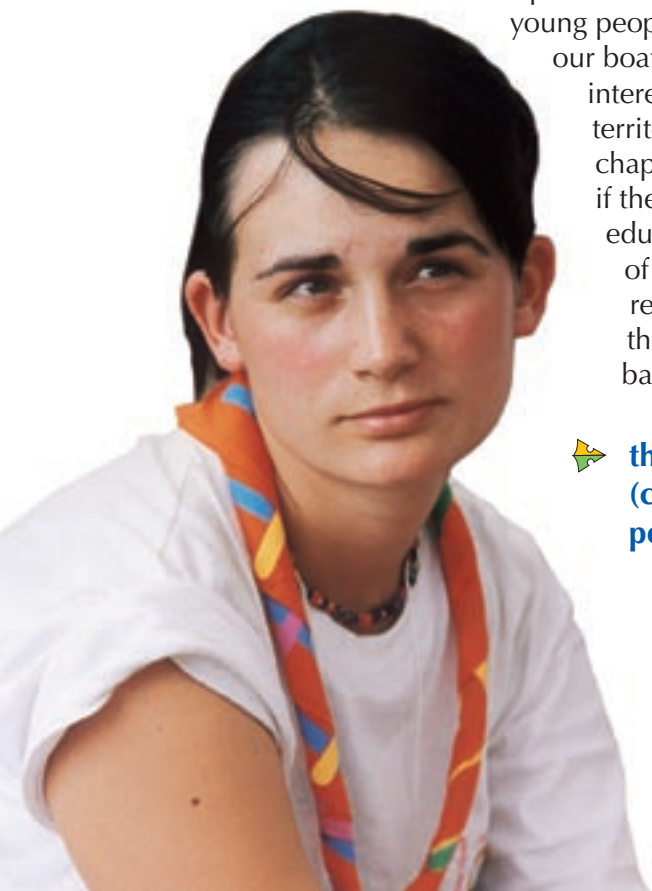
The spirit of the mission permeates the Patrols too, but the young people are not the ones responsible for keeping our boat firmly on course toward it. They are mainly interested in the adventure of “exploring new territories with a group of friends”, as we saw in chapters one and two. It would be odd indeed if they had joined Scouting in order “to be educated”. Their learning comes about as a result of group life, and maintaining group life is the responsibility of the Scout Unit, which acts as the guardian of the mission, highlighting two basic aspects:



the meaning of everything that is done (contributing to the education of young people to help build a better world)



the process through which it is done (applying the Scout Method, which makes young people the principal agents in their own development).





THE SCOUT UNIT IS A COMMUNITY MOVING FORWARD TOWARDS A SHARED VISION

The *vision* is the response to the question “Where are we going?”.

It is the image that the Scout Unit has of its own future. The vision is normally expressed in the form of one or several annual objectives which the Unit proposes for inclusion in the Plan of the Scout Group to which it belongs.

A vision consists of proposals such as “this year we will get a meeting place for all the Patrols”; “the drop-out rate will fall to 10% at most”; “we will spend 20 nights under canvass and be better prepared for camping”; “we will take part in all the district and national events organized by the Association”; “our sponsoring institution will evaluate us as its best educational programme”; “at the end of the year we will have grown by 50%, 90% of the young people will use Logs and all the Patrols will have full kits”; “we will be the best Unit in the District”; and so on. These proposals will depend on the Unit’s level of development, its expectations for the future and its members’ perception of their ability to make them a reality.

To be effective, a vision has to be shared. It has to be a vision that everyone –young people and Adult Leaders alike– feels is representative of them and believes they can build together.

A *shared vision* is more than an idea. It is an impressively powerful force in the heart of all the members of the Unit. It may grow from an idea, but if it is convincing enough to win everyone’s support, then it is no longer an abstract idea, but has become palpable and begins to be perceived as if it were visible. It imbues the Unit with a perception of common bonds and, however varied the activities of the Patrols, it gives consistency to everything they do.



THE SCOUT UNIT IS A SPACE WHERE THE PATROLS INTERACT



When we talked about the Patrol, we said that it interacts with

other Patrols. The Scout Unit is the space where that interaction happens. It happens in a general and spontaneous way through all the components of group life, but it is particularly marked in a number of specific situations:

- In *shared variable activities* for the whole Unit, which take place when all the Patrols have decided to carry out the same activity in parallel or when they undertake specific tasks within an activity that involves everyone. Shared activities should be spaced out enough to avoid them interfering with the Patrol activities, which have priority.
- In *projects* in which the Patrols undertake different individual activities within a set of activities that form part of a wider initiative.
- In *camps, games, campfires, competitions and other fixed activities*, in the preparation of which the Patrols undertake different responsibilities.
- At the *Unit Council*, which is responsible for reconciling the different interests of the Patrols, represented by the Patrol Leaders and Assistant Leaders.
- At the *Unit Assembly*, where all the members of the Patrols exercise the right to voice their opinion and participate in decision-making.



This interaction enables the Patrols to:



Learn from each other.



Value their own performance and try to do even better.



Experience the benefits of cooperation, solidarity and teamwork.



Take part in democratic life, making decisions and undertaking the resulting responsibilities, and respecting majority opinion.



Exercise social skills in a kind of virtual environment, with defined limits, where they can try out those skills and make mistakes without undue risks or irreversible consequences.



THE SCOUT UNIT IDEALLY CONSISTS OF 4 PATROLS AND 32 YOUNG PEOPLE



Experience has shown that a Unit consisting of 3 to 5

Patrols is the ideal number to provide opportunities for interaction and make the shared activities more attractive. In a Unit with only 2 Patrols, interaction is reduced to a minimum and shared activities are not as attractive. A number larger than 5 generates organizational difficulties and thins out the personalized support that the Adult Leaders can give to the Patrol Leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders and to the young people whose development they monitor.

On the basis of the recommended number of members to a Patrol, the membership of an ideal Unit of 4 Patrols will fluctuate between 20 and 32 young people. In any case, these numbers are secondary to the peer group in importance: it is essential that the Patrols consist of groups of friends, independently of their number. It must not be forgotten that a Unit is a federation of unlike but internally cohesive Patrols.

It is not a good idea to admit more Patrols to the Unit that can be attended to by the number of trained Adult Leaders available. It is unwise to create “giant” Units. These give the impression of being able to field a large number of people and wield power, but offer little possibility of personalized work. If the Unit has more than 5 Patrols, depending on the characteristics of the Scout Group, it is probably best to form 2 Units of 3 Patrols each. Obviously this will create a need to recruit and train enough Adult Leaders to keep up the level of personal attention.

YOUNG PEOPLE FROM 11 TO 15, DEPENDING ON INDIVIDUAL GROWTH RATES



The Scout Unit assembles Patrols comprising young people from 11 to 15 years of age. This is a development cycle which corresponds to the first stage of adolescence, with common features that set it apart from the previous and following periods. Two age groups may be distinguished within this stage: 11 to 13 and 13 to 15. These groups or ranges correspond to two different columns of objectives that are proposed to young people in all the growth areas, as we will see in chapter 9.



These are generic age ranges and not strict age limits, since each young person has their own rate of development, which is influenced by many different factors. The age at which a young person joins the Patrol, how long he or she stays in it and the point at which one progress stage gives way to another thus depend more on the person's stage of development than on their age. This is assessed on a case-by-case basis by the young person him or herself, with the help of the Patrol and the Adult Leader who monitors his or her growth.

This means that a young person is not necessarily ready to join a Patrol just when they turn 11. They may be ready a few months earlier, especially girls, who begin puberty one or two years earlier than boys. Girls or boys younger than 10 should not be admitted under any circumstances, since the type of activities and method used are not suitable for them. Children may also join after the age of 11, especially those who have a slower rate of development.

In any case, the maturity of the young person is an important consideration, but admittance to and continued presence in a Patrol depend on the friendship and acceptance of the rest of its members.

Likewise, young people do not leave the Patrol on the very day of their fifteenth birthday, but when they begin to have concerns and interests that will find a more satisfactory response in the next Section. Young people naturally give signs that they are ready and keen to move up, and the Adult Leaders have to learn to perceive these signs in a timely fashion.

UNITS CAN BE MIXED OR SINGLE-SEX

When we spoke of the Patrol, we said that in some cases Patrols could be mixed, depending on the features of the respective peer group, the ages of the young people, how quickly they generate friendships with members of the other sex and the characteristics of the wider culture. We also said that the fact that it is mixed or single-sex should not be allowed to interrupt the natural dynamics of the peer group or affect the Patrol's internal cohesion or, in consequence, its performance as a learning community.



Just as the Patrol can be mixed, the Scout Unit can be mixed too. It may consist of single-sex and/or mixed Patrols. This decision is made by the Unit Council and the respective Scout Group, in view of its history, educational options and the cultural characteristics of the wider environment.

A number of basic conditions must be met to run a mixed Unit:

- 👉 Female, male and mixed Patrols must be treated equally in terms of rights and duties, with no discrimination of any kind.
- 👉 The activities must not reinforce the cultural stereotypes seen in society. No distinction should be made between activities “for girls” and activities “for boys”. The process of choosing activities proposed in the programme cycle is the best antidote to this tendency, since it offers each Patrol the opportunity to choose autonomously what it wants to do.
- 👉 The Unit should incorporate awareness of the differences between the sexes into the educational climate, picking out and highlighting the great potential of being a man or of being a woman.
- 👉 Group life should ensure that the sexes acknowledge and recognize each other, and respect each other's intimacy.
- 👉 The interaction between Patrols should promote the complementary nature of the two sexes.
- 👉 The Team of Adult Leaders must be mixed, and it is advisable for the monitoring of objectives to be conducted by a Leader of the same sex. This enables the young people to observe and learn from the cooperation they see in the mixed Team of Adult Leaders, and to identify with models of behaviour relative to their own sex.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SCOUT UNIT



**AS WELL AS THE PATROLS,
THE UNIT STRUCTURE COMPRISES
THREE OTHER BODIES**

These are part of the Unit as a support organization for the Patrol System. They are not a command structure nor is there any hierarchical order between them.



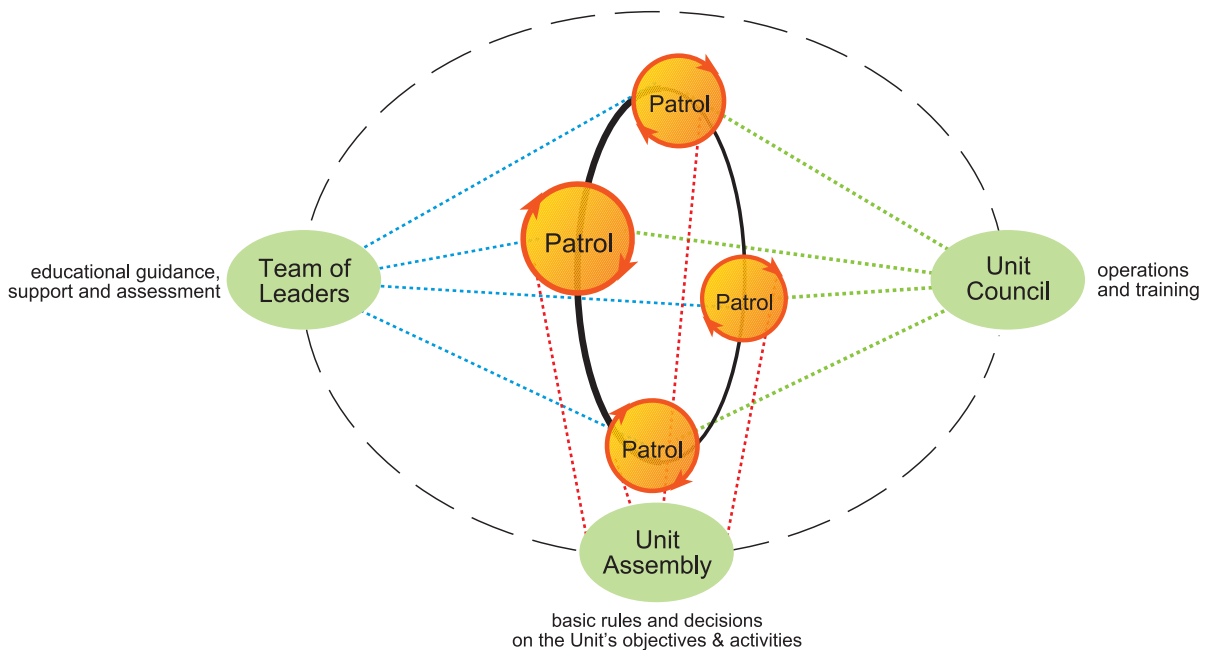
The Unit Assembly



The Unit Council



The Team of Adult Leaders



As shown in the figure, these bodies “orbit” the Patrol System, each playing a different supportive role, but without interfering in the operation of the Patrols.

THE UNIT ASSEMBLY MAKES BASIC RULES AND DECIDES ON UNIT OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES



The Assembly consists of all the members of the Unit, who participate as individuals and not as representatives of their Patrols.

It meets at least twice during every programme cycle or whenever circumstances require a meeting.

It is presided by a young person elected for the purpose when the Assembly begins. The Adult Leaders participate without the right to vote.

The Assembly determines rules of operation or coexistence whenever the Unit needs to establish them. Since the rules affect everyone, everyone has a say in the decision. This is the Assembly's main contribution to the operation of the system.

It also has a role in other matters which affect everyone:



It determines the annual objectives of the Unit, as they are expressed in the Group Plan. In other words, it establishes the *vision*.



It decides on the shared activities that will be carried out in a programme cycle and approves the calendar of activities once these have been organized by the Unit Council.



THE UNIT COUNCIL ORGANIZES THE OPERATIONS AND CONDUCTS TRAINING











**The Council consists
of the Patrol Leaders and**

Assistant Patrol Leaders and the Team of Adult Leaders. It meets at least once a month. It is coordinated by the Unit Leader, although the members may fully or partially rotate this coordination among themselves, as an exercise in leadership.

The Council plays a dual role: it is both a governing body and an instance of learning for the Patrol Leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders. Through their representatives, all the Patrols are involved in the process of taking decisions that concern shared action. For this representation to be effective, the Patrols need to know in advance of the business to be discussed at the Unit Council and express their opinions. Whatever their individual opinions, however, all the members of the Unit show solidarity with the resolutions reached.

***As an instance that coordinates operations,*
the Council deals in general with all the aspects
that concern the interaction between the Patrols.
This includes a number of key responsibilities:**



-  To prepare the diagnosis and emphasis for each programme cycle and pre-select the Unit activities.
-  To organize the Unit activities selected by the Assembly into a calendar of activities and help with designing and preparing them.
-  To evaluate the programme of activities carried out in each cycle and establish the criteria for assessing the young people's personal progress.
-  To resolve on the awarding of progress badges at the proposal of the monitoring Adult Leader.
-  To obtain and administer the resources needed for conducting and financing the programmed activities.
-  To support the Patrols in their operations and in the integration of new members; and supervise the election of Patrol Leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders.
-  To take action to recruit new Patrols when necessary.
-  To decide, together with the Group Council when appropriate, on whether the Patrols and Unit should be mixed or single-sex, without prejudice to the guidelines discussed in chapter 3.



**As an instance of learning,
the Unit Council's key responsibilities are:**








- To reflect on the extent to which its members are living by the Promise and Law.
- To supply specific training and technical information for certain activities, through its members or third parties.
- To train Patrol Leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders to carry out their responsibilities. This is essential for the Patrol System to work properly. It should be remembered that the Adult Leaders act as educational mediators, almost always "through" the Patrol Leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders. "The Scout Leader works through the Patrol Leaders." (Baden-Powell, *Aids to Scoutmastership*, 1919)
- To recruit and provide guidance for external monitors who oversee the proficiencies the young people choose to pursue.
- To receive new members and organize their introductory period.
- To determine actions of recognition or correction when necessary or appropriate.

THE TEAM OF ADULT LEADERS PROVIDES EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE, SUPPORT AND ASSESSMENT



The Team consists of one Adult Leader for each Patrol in the Scout Unit. A four-Patrol Unit, which is the most common, requires four Leaders: one *Unit Leader* and three *Assistant Unit Leaders*. The Team meets once a week and is coordinated by the Unit Leader.

In general, the Leaders act as educational mediators, as a team or individually, by means of:








-  Designing the conditions in which the Unit operates.
-  Keeping the mission alive and promoting the vision.
-  Ensuring that all the elements of the Method are applied in order to sustain *group life*; and creating the conditions for *learning fields* to operate within the Patrols.
-  Preparing background information for Council and Assembly meetings and ensuring they never take decisions that are properly the responsibility of these bodies.
-  Individually undertaking the responsibility for monitoring and helping to assess the progress of the members of a Patrol, as we will see when we talk about assessing the young people's personal progress.
-  Preparing and giving information sessions for parents on the educational role they are expected to play in relation to the work carried out in the Unit.
-  Supporting each other in their personal development.



Depending on their personal characteristics, the Adult Leaders allocate among themselves the tasks deriving from these responsibilities and from their position as members of the Unit Council. It is advisable to make this distribution of tasks flexible and variable, and not subject to strict rules. The Association's description of positions and responsibilities should be taken as a general guide and not as law.

In chapter 7 we will analyse in greater depth the responsibilities of the adults as educational leaders.

**One of the main problems in all Units
is finding enough suitable Adult Leaders.
Sometimes we can't find them because we are looking in too small a circle.
It is a good idea to widen the search to other fields:**

-  Friends, colleagues and relatives of the members of your Team of Leaders, who are motivated by the example of the person they know in Scouting.
-  Former leaders of the Scout Group who wish to return to their Scouting activities. A refresher training period will avoid the tendency to do things "the way we did in my day" which is not always a good thing.
-  Parents and relatives of the young people, who are often enthusiastic about the results they see in their children or young relatives.
-  People linked to the Scout Group's sponsoring institution, who have a stake in the success of the Group in the interests of their own organization.
-  Teachers and specialists in the teaching and psychology professions, or other professionals from the schools the young people in the Unit attend.
-  Students at university, further education or technical institutes, especially those studying courses related to education. They are at a stage in life in which, if suitably motivated, they can devote a lot of time to voluntary work.
-  People who work in all areas of social and community development organizations, in non-governmental organizations, or in service or charity institutions, and whose occupation disposes them to educational work with young people.



**It is not necessary to have been a Scout before to be a Leader.
The Association's training, on-the-job practice
and the constant support of the Team of Leaders will provide the knowledge,
experience and personal development needed for the job.**



IDENTITY OF THE SCOUT UNIT



THE NAME OF THE YOUTH MEMBERS

The young people in this section are called “Scouts” because in 1907 Scouting began with youngsters of this particular age group, who were known by this name even before Scouting adopted it officially.

Robert Baden-Powell used this word because it was a general term for explorers, mountaineers, pathfinders, sailors, missionaries, discoverers, investigators; in short all those who “go before” to open up paths for others to follow.

Units often have a name linked to the symbolic framework of explorations, expeditions and discoveries, or the area or institution of the Scout Group to which the Unit belongs. If there is a single Unit, it may take the name of the Group. The name may also refer to an outstanding historical figure or a significant place or event. A choice that is suitable and in good taste helps the young people to identify with the Unit.

THE NAME OF THE UNIT



THE UNIFORM

Scouts wear a uniform that identifies them to the community. The Scout uniform has been simplified over time. Today’s uniform was designed by the Association to allow us to carry out our activities comfortably. It also avoids dress being a source of difference between the young people. Some Units wear a simple T-shirt with a badge for many of their non-formal activities.

A number of other symbols can be represented on our uniform, such as the fleur-de-lys, the scarf or neckerchief and the Group, Association, Promise and progress badges, as well as badges denoting proficiencies and events.

THE FLEUR-DE-LYS



This is a universal Scout symbol and comes from the ancient maps in which it figures in the compass rose pointing North. In the words of Baden-Powell, it represents “the good path that all Scouts should follow”.





THE NECKERCHIEF OR SCARF

This is a triangular cloth that is folded around the neck, held in place by a ring or woggle which can be made of different materials. It has the colours of the Scout Group the Unit belongs to and serves to identify Scouts all over the world. It also has lots of practical uses in activities and in the outdoors.



BADGES



The badges that identify our *Association* and the *Scout Group* the Unit belongs to show that the Scout Unit is part of the local community and of a national organization.

The *Promise* badge is worn by all Scouts who have made their Promise, in other words those who have made a commitment to live in accordance with the Scout Law.

The *progress badges* indicate the stage the young person is currently pursuing in his or her personal objectives. The *proficiency badges* bear witness to the specific knowledge and skills that a young boy or girl has acquired in the Unit.



Event badges are worn temporarily on the uniform, while the event lasts and for a certain time afterwards.

All these badges and their position on the uniform have been defined by our Association and can be found in the badge leaflet, together with other nationally authorized badges.

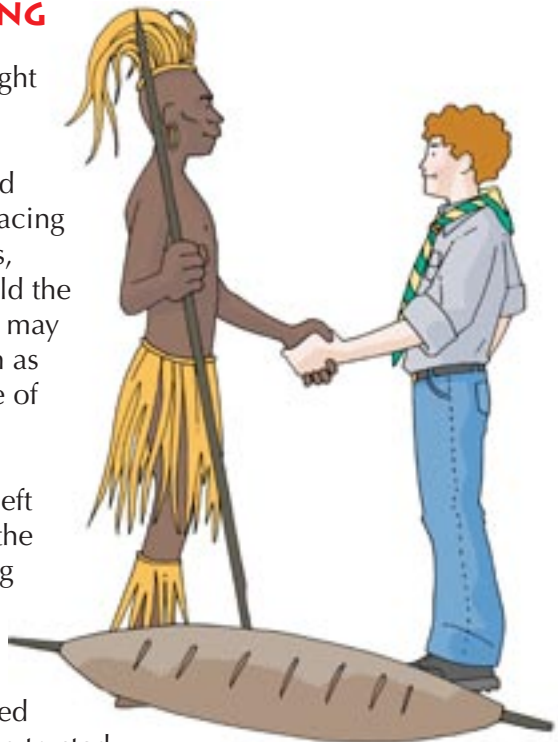
It is not a good idea to wear more badges on the uniform than those stipulated. Otherwise, their meaning is lost and the overall effect may not even be attractive.



THE GREETING

Scouts greet each other with the right hand, placing the thumb over the pinkie and raising the other three fingers. The arm is bent slightly backward and the hand is held at shoulder height, with the palm facing forward. Many Units have other traditions, depending on the occasion, on how to hold the arm and hand. However, any form which may give the greeting a militaristic aspect, such as raising stretched fingers smartly to the side of the forehead, should be avoided.

Scouts usually shake each other's left hand too. There are many legends about the origin of this custom. The most convincing of these comes from the tradition of the *Ashanti* tribe. Ashanti warriors normally shook each other's right hand so as not to let go of the protective shield they carried in their left. But when they were greeting a trusted friend, they would lay down their shield and offer their left hand, as a token of confidence.



A COLOUR



The first badges that Baden-Powell had made were embroidered in yellow on a green background, and those two colours came to be recognized as the colours of Scouting. Since the Scout Section was the first to be created, it kept the colour green, and the Cub Section later adopted the yellow. This tradition is maintained today in many Units around the world, which often use a green Unit flag too.



UNIT LOG OR RECORD BOOK



Although this is not a symbolic element as such, it is a good idea for the Unit to keep a simple book for resolutions, in which to record the decisions taken by the Assembly and the Council. As well as serving as a testimony of what has been agreed, this book serves as a written record of the Unit's history, which helps to maintain its identity.

