

# Overseas Branches of The Scout Association



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Overseas Branches of The Scout Association are to be found in all regions of the world.

Constitutionally these Scouts are just as much part of The Scout Association as, for example, Scouts in Scotland, Birmingham or the Channel Islands.

Historically, the first Scout Troops in the Dominions and Colonies were formed in 1908. As was the custom in the British Empire in those days, they automatically became part of the Boy Scouts Association and they looked to what was then called Imperial Headquarters in London for guidance and instructions. By the beginning of the Great War, Scouting was to be found in 30 countries in the Empire.

At an early stage it became obvious that the methods of administering and organising Scouting in the United Kingdom were unsuited to the needs and conditions of those overseas, and this led to the formation of the Overseas Branches. Each was granted a constitution, a Chief Commissioner was appointed, and the Sovereign's representative in that territory was invited to become the local Chief Scout. This system of organisation and administration is still used in our Branches today, although now the arrangements for member programme, Leader Training and so on are decided upon by the Branch itself and consequently vary considerably around the world.

With the creation of the World Scout Movement at the first World Jamboree at Olympia in 1920, the question of the Branches becoming independent Scout Associations began to be considered. The decision to apply for membership of the Conference was one for the Branch itself to take. South Africa was the first Branch to become independent in 1937, with India following in 1938,

Canada in 1946, and Australia and New Zealand in 1953. Forty four former Branches in Commonwealth countries have so far gained their Scouting independence.

To ensure that the Overseas Branches of The Scout Association have a voice in the running of the Movement, the International Commissioner represents them at the Committee of the Council; he is their link and the person they look to for advice and assistance. Support is given to them by the International Office and of course they have access to all Headquarters services.

The Scout Association and the World Scout Bureau are committed as far as possible to enabling Overseas Branches to stand on their own feet and to apply for direct membership of World Scouting at the appropriate time.

Some of the countries in which there are still Branches have gained their political independence, and are aiming for their Scouting independence as soon as the Branch has met the basic requirements for membership of the World Conference, ie. A sound training programme, the nucleus of a training team, and a Constitution which follows the fundamentals of the Movement laid down by the Founder. Small Associations find these requirements difficult but it is a challenge with which The Scout Association is helping. In particular Branches in the South Pacific are receiving support additionally from the Asia Pacific Scout Office and from New Zealand and Australia. Caribbean Branches receive support from the Inter American Scout Office.

There is an opportunity for Scouts in the United Kingdom to create partnerships with our Branches – this would provide opportunities for both sides to

## The Scout Information Centre

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enjoy better Scouting and to work on a long term relationships.

The International Scout Fellowship also has in its remit the support of the Branches and ways of extending this are always being looked at.

To discuss either of these ways of linking up with the Overseas Branches, contact the International Office at Gilwell Park.

BRANCH	Date formed	Scout Census	Area Sq Miles	Population	Political Status
ANGUILLA	1932	109	35	11,600	UKOT
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA	1913	302	170	65,000	IS
BERMUDA	1910	392	21	62,059	UKOT
BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS	1932	131	59	21,647	UKOT
CAYMAN ISLANDS	1993	320	100	44,800	UKOT
GIBRALTAR	1908	282	2	28,520	UKOT
MONSERRAT	1929	45	39	4,500	UKOT
ST KITTS & NEVIS	1928	200	101	38,000	IS
SOLOMAN ISLANDS	1928	300	11,500	463,000	IS
TONGA	1953	250	270	99,000	IK
TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS	1973	39	193	20,020	UKOT
TUVALU	1975	100	10	11,146	IS
VANUATU	1956	200	5,700	202,000	REP

Notes:

1. The degree of self government varies from area to area.
2. The Scout Census was taken in 1992, 1994 or 2003

UKOT	United Kingdom Overseas Territory
IS	Independent State
REP	Republic
IK	Independent Kingdom
DSH	Dependency of St Helen