

EUROPEAN SCOUT FEDERATION

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British Association

HANDBOOK

Volume One: Otters

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OTTER HANDBOOK

This book belongs to

.....

Team.....

Colony.....

Date of Birth.....

Date of Investiture.....

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Otter Handbook | 1 |
| Contents | 3 |
| Acknowledgements | 4 |
| Foreword | 5 |
| How Scouts, Wolf Cubs and Otters began | 6 |
| The Colony, Colony Meetings and Prayer | 8 |
| Otter Uniform | 9 |
| Scout Sign and Salute | 10 |
| Investiture | 11 |
| Adventures of Buster Bear | 12 |
| The Investiture Ceremony | 13 |
| Brown Paw | 14 |
| Green Paw | 15 |
| Blue Paw | 16 |
| Orange Paw | 17 |
| Golden Paw | 18 |
| Proficiency Badges; Artist, Athlete and Bookworm | 19 |
| Proficiency Badges; Collector, Cook and Craft | 20 |
| Proficiency Badges; Entertainer, Gardener and House Orderly | 21 |
| Proficiency Badges; Local Guide, Swimmer, Weather Watcher | 22 |
| Proficiency Badges; First Aid, Environmental, Faith | 23 |
| Notes for Otter Leaders, Otter Yells | 24 |
| Record Card | 25 |

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FOREWORD

"I suppose every British boy wants to help his country in some way or other. There is a way, by which he can do so easily, and that is by becoming a scout."

Those words are taken from the first part of a fortnightly magazine published in 1908, called 'Scouting for Boys - A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship' written by Lieut. -General R. S. S. Baden-Powell.

Many years later, the Scout movement has spread all over the world, and is a major force in uniting the young people of different countries, races and religions. After the Second World War, several groups of Scouts within Europe tried to form a European Scouting body, and the C. E. S. is the end result.

The British Association, the F.S.E. was formed in 1959 and this is its' Otter Handbook; it will help you, whether you are an Otter, Wolf Cub, Scout, Rover, or Scoutmaster, to follow Scouting's rugged trail; read it well. This is your personal handbook; share it with your friends who are not Otters and invite them to join you in the game of Scouting. This book will tell you what is expected of you in the Otter Law and Promise, and it will help you become a good citizen as Baden-Powell envisaged so many years ago.

Yours in Scouting,

Tony Ward
National Commissioner (October 1999 – October 2011)

May I, on behalf of all your Commissioners and Officers, trust that you will enjoy your days in Scouting and that we will see you for many years to come within the Scouting Movement.

Yours in Scouting,

Jad McCormack (National Commissioner Aug 2012 -)



HOW SCOUTS, WOLF CUBS AND OTTERS BEGAN

Lord Baden-Powell was a famous soldier who taught his troops to follow tracks and to travel across country without being seen. He also taught them how to look after themselves while camping in rough country in South Africa. When he came back to England he wrote a book called *Scouting for Boys*, meant for older boys. So many younger boys wanted to join Scouts that he started Wolf Cubs for boys and girls up to 7 years of age.

Julie Carp, Ken Baines and Phil Balfe of the 3rd/ 4th Lancashire Scout Group first set up Otters in December 1987 to accommodate children under the age of 7, who were interested in joining the F.S.E.

Boys and girls can join at the age of 5 and stay with the Colony until they are 7, after which they can join the Wolf Cub Pack.

The Otter Colony helps young boys and girls prepare themselves for joining Wolf Cubs. It introduces them to the Scout Group and helps them feel part of it; they can develop their abilities by learning and taking part with children of their own age.

Otters do a variety of activities, games, craft, helping each other by teamwork and learning a little about the origins of Scouting. They are also introduced to badge work in the form of tests which help them to think, use their own talents and to communicate with others.

OTTERS

Otters are very shy and playful animals. They are small mammals belonging to the weasel family and live in fresh or salt water. They are nocturnal which means they come out at night to play and find things to eat. There are two main types of Otter, river and sea. River Otters (fresh water) usually live near rivers that have lots of fish and plants. The river Otter usually lives alone and their favourite food is fish, but they also eat frogs and crayfish. They live in dens around the riverbanks. When they are swimming they steer with their back paws which are webbed, making good paddles.

Sea Otter (salt water) are very similar to river Otters except they live in oceans, which are cold.



THE COLONY

The Colony consists of teams of Otters. Each team has a named colour i.e. red, green, yellow and orange. Each team has a team leader and a second. Team leaders are responsible for getting their team ready for inspection, games, activities and looking after new Otters in their team.

COLONY MEETINGS

Opening of meeting

Flag Break

Closing of meeting

Flag Down

OTTER PRAYER

Dear God,

(hands together in prayer)

Your world is so beautiful

(arms move to mime a ball shape)

All the big things

(stretch arms to the ceiling)

And all the small things

(bend over at the waist to touch the floor)

Please look after us

(arms across your chest, like a cuddle)

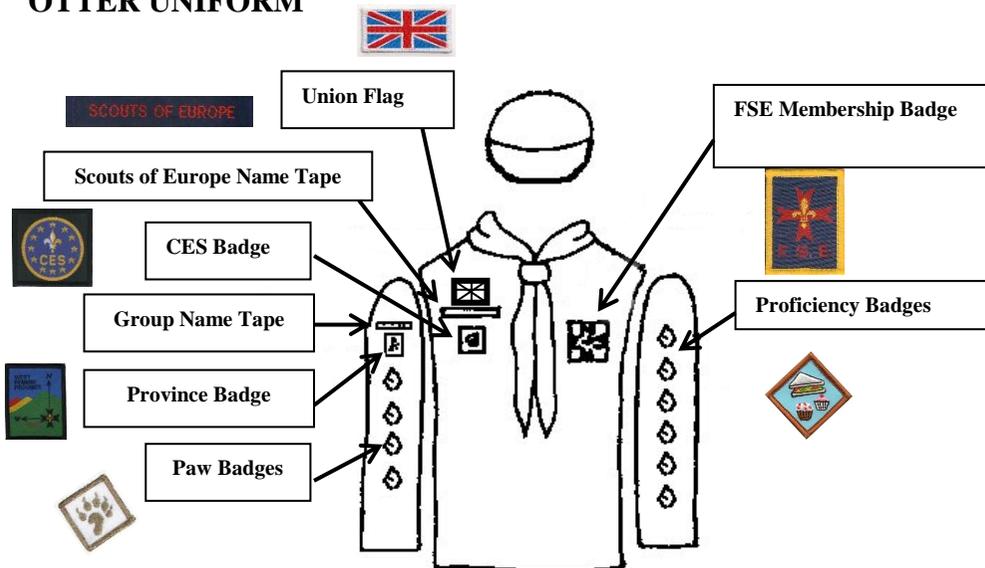
And help us look after your world

(one hand on top of the other, palms upwards, arms outstretched in front)

Amen

(hands together in prayer)

OTTER UNIFORM

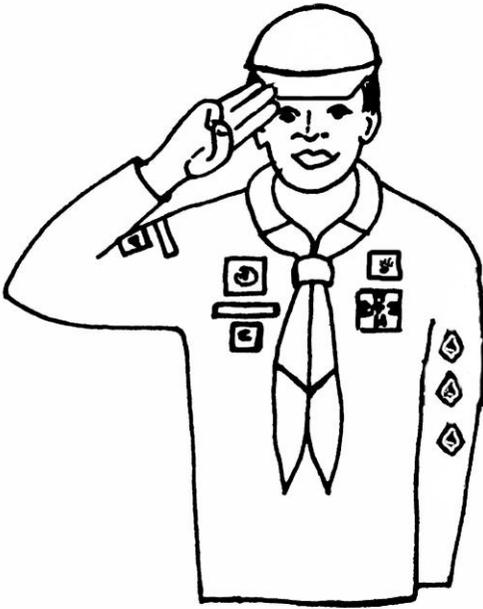


Boys: Grey sweatshirt, grey shorts, white knee length socks, group neckerchief with woggle. Red baseball cap.

Girls: Grey sweatshirt, grey skirt, white knee length socks, group neckerchief with woggle. Red baseball cap.

The Otter uniform is something to be proud of and therefore Otters are expected to arrive at Colony meetings clean and tidy.

THE SCOUT SALUTE AND SIGN



INVESTITURE

There are 6 things to learn and do before an Otter can be invested

1. Know the Otter Law and try to keep it
2. Know the Otter promise and try to keep it
3. Know the Otter motto
4. Know the name of the man who started Scouts
5. Take an active part in colony meetings for at least 8 consecutive weeks
6. Know the names of two characters from 'Buster Bear'

OTTER PROMISE

Otters try to keep the Otter Law,
Learn about God and,
Look after their World.

OTTER LAW

An Otter always does his best and is a friend to all.

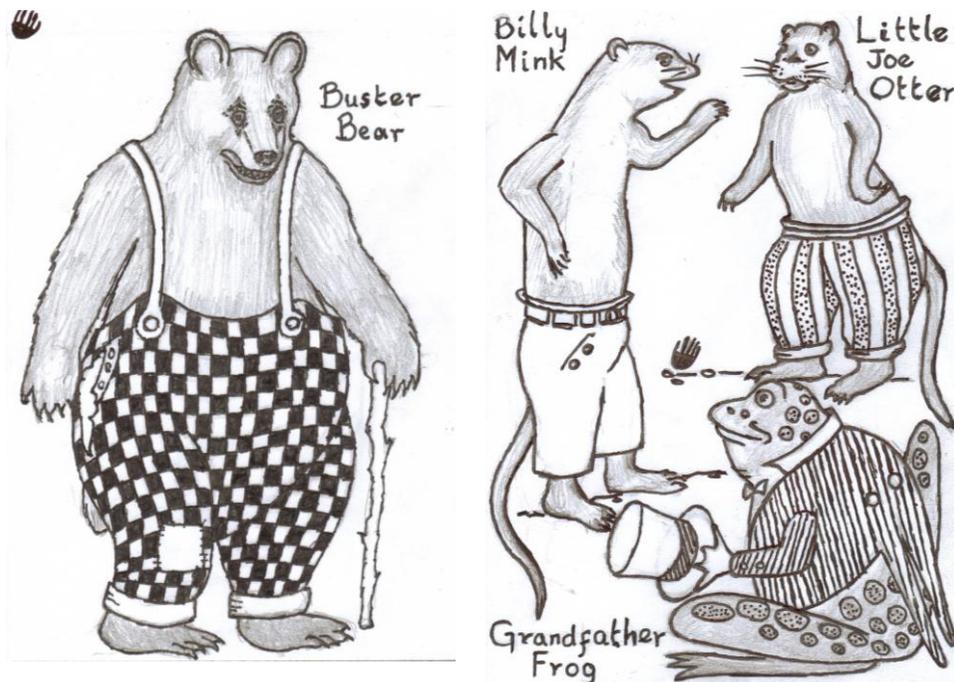
OTTER MOTTO

Always busy and bright.

THE ADVENTURES OF BUSTER BEAR

Thornton Burgess wrote a story about an Otter called Little Joe Otter who grew up and lived in the Green Forest near the Laughing Brook. The animals of the forest spend time together and learn lots of important lessons. In the book, Buster Bear helps to teach Little Joe Otter a lesson with the help of Grandfather Frog. After a short period Buster Bear and Little Joe Otter become good friends!

There are several other forest creatures too; Danny Meadow Mouse, Billy Mink, Reddy the Fox, Jumper the Hare, Peter Rabbit, Old Mr Toad, Chatterer the Red Squirrel, Happy Jack the Grey Squirrel and many, many more. The leaders of your Otter Colony will have one of these forest names too.



INVESTITURE OF AN OTTER

Procedure

Colony to stand in their teams or the 'holt' formation with the flag at the front and the Leaders stood either side of the flag. Everybody is stood at ease. The flag should be lowered to a level at which the Otter can hold it, without the flag touching the floor. The neckerchief should already be prepared with the woggle for their team and close at hand for the OL.

OL: Today is a very important day for (Insert Otter Name) s/he has worked hard at learning their Law and Promise and has shown dedication to our Colony through their attendance.

(Bring the Colony to the alert)

OL: (Insert Otter Name) would you like to come to the front please?

Recruit comes to the front and is helped by the Leader to hold the flag in their left hand and make the Scout sign with their right hand. AOL's help the Colony to make the Scout sign using the correct hand.

OL: As Otters we try to keep the Otter Law, which is to always do his/her best and be a friend to all. We will all renew our promise together to welcome (Insert Otter Name) into our Colony.

All: An Otter tries to keep the Otter Law, learn about God and look after their world.

OL will put the neckerchief around the new recruits' neck, give them a left handed handshake and give them their certificate in their right hand.

OL: Congratulations, well done and welcome to the Colony.

The Otter is presented with their neckerchief, investiture badges and a certificate. The Otter will walk around the colony giving a left handshake to the other members.



FIRST STEP - BROWN PAW-MARK
(Represents the colour of the Otter)

Learn as much as possible about the otter and be able to answer the following questions about otters and how they live.

1. Where does an otter spend most of its life?
2. How do otters steer themselves in the water?
3. What is an otters favourite food?
4. Where do otters sleep?
5. What sort of animal is an otter?

Date Passed.....Signed.....



SECOND STEP - GREEN PAW-MARK

(Represents grass, environment etc.)

1. Make a collection of 10 different types of leaves or flowers, for example. Oak, Horse Chestnut and Sycamore leaves, Daisy, Buttercup and Dandelions. Mount them on a display board. Label each one with its name and where it was found.

Be careful not to collect wild flowers that are protected.

2. Paint a picture using the colours found in the countryside.

3. Know three ways to care for the environment.

Date Passed.....Signed.....



THIRD STEP - BLUE PAW MARK
(Represents water)

1. Find 5 different things which float and 5 which sink in water.
2. Name 5 animals, other than otters, which live in freshwater.
3. Visit a freshwater stream and take a photograph of yourself when there.

Date Passed.....Signed.....



FOURTH STEP - (FINAL) ORANGE PAW-MARK
(Represents sun-light)

1. Be able to tie a bow and a reef knot.
2. Know how to tell the time using a clock with hands.
3. Know how and when to make a telephone call to the emergency services.
4. Know your own address including postcode, telephone number and full name of your parents.

Date Passed.....Signed.....



THE GOLDEN PAW-MARK ([link to Cubs badge](#))

1. Know the Wolf Cub Law and Promise.
2. Meet Akela and attend at least 6 Wolf Cub Pack meetings.
3. Learn the names of the Jungle Book characters.

Date Passed.....Signed.....

PROFICIENCY BADGES

(H= can be done at home and presented to the colony)



ARTIST (H)

Spend time drawing or painting a picture of an otter in its natural surroundings.



ATHLETE

Be able to throw and catch a tennis ball from 3 metres.

Be able to run 15 metres in 10 seconds.

Know how to show good sportsmanship.



BOOKWORM (H)

Read any book about otters, fact or fiction.

Be able to tell the rest of your Colony about what you have read



COLLECTOR (H)

Collect 12 useful items and fit them into a matchbox. e.g. stamp, drawing pin.



COOK

Make a sandwich

Make crispy cakes or fairy cakes (make sure an adult helps you when using a cooker or hob)

Discuss the importance of hygiene when working with food



CRAFT

Make a finger puppet or a model of an otter.



ENTERTAINER

By yourself or with other Otters do something entertaining for two minutes. For instance telling jokes, singing a song, play a tune on a musical instrument.



GARDENER (H)

Create a garden in a biscuit tin or similar container and name the different plants used and why.



HOUSE ORDERLY (H)

Clean and tidy a room

Help make your bed every day for at least a week

Lay a table for a meal for at least two people



LOCAL GUIDE

Draw a map of where you live
Show your home, school, church, where you meet for Otters. Using at least 3 Ordinance Survey Symbols



SWIMMER (H)

Be able to swim 25 metres using any stroke with or without armbands.
Be able to walk a width of the pool without any buoyancy aids.
Jump up and down, putting your head under the water 5 times
Swimming certificates can be shown as proof of ability.



WEATHER WATCHER

Make a weather station
Keep a record of the rainfall and wind direction for a month

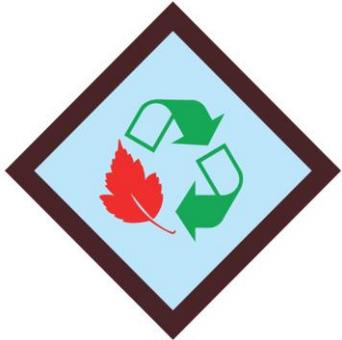


FIRST AID BADGE

Know who to contact in an emergency
Show how to put a person in the recovery position

Know how to clean a cut/graze and put on a plaster

Draw a Poster showing the First Aid symbol



ENVIRONMENTAL BADGE

Know what recycling is and know where to look for the recycling symbol on things.

Draw a poster to remind people to recycle

Identify what can be recycled and where to put it for collection



FAITH BADGE

Attend at least 2 religious services and say what you did;

(e.g. diary entry, photographs, story.)

Lead the Otter Prayer at a colony meeting

Tell, or write about a religious figure from your religious text.

Be able to name 2 other faiths.

NOTES FOR OTTER LEADERS

Investiture Ceremony Notes:

- It is acceptable to invest more than one Otter at a time.
- This is the ideal time to give the latest version of the Otter Handbook to the child, initially to advise the parents on where to put the badges but also so the Otters can start working on their proficiency badges at home

Opening of Colony meeting

1. Flag Break
2. Brief description of the programme

Closing of Colony meeting

1. Awarding of badges and investitures
2. Notices - giving out of letters
3. Flag Down
4. Prayer (see page 8)
5. Dismiss

Otter Yells

‘Holt’

An Otters home is called a Holt. When a leader shouts “Holt,” the children move to make a circle around the leader. The most effective way to form a circle is to encourage the Otters to hold hands and form a circle; they take a step backwards until the circle is the required size. The children then repeat the call, ‘Holt,’ release hands and sit down.

This yell can be used for:

1. Giving instructions
2. To start a circle game
3. Developing team work and listening

‘River Bank’

River Otters make their holt’s in the river bank. When a Leader shouts, “River bank,” the Otters must form a straight line, facing the Leader, stood at alert.

This yell can be used for:

1. Giving instructions
2. Developing team work and listening



OTTER

Name _____

RECORD CARD

Team _____

| INVESTITURE | DATE |
|------------------------|------|
| Otter Law | |
| Otter Promise | |
| Otter Motto | |
| Founders Name | |
| Attendance | |
| Buster Bear Characters | |
| INVESTED | |

| BLUE PAW | DATE |
|----------------------|------|
| Flotation | |
| 5 Freshwater Animals | |
| Visit Stream | |
| AWARDED | |

| ORANGE PAW | DATE |
|------------------|------|
| Knots | |
| Tell Time | |
| Call Emergencies | |
| Name & Address | |
| AWARDED | |

| BROWN PAW | DATE |
|----------------|------|
| Otter Habitat | |
| Otter Mobility | |
| Otter Food | |
| Otter Domicile | |
| Otter Family | |
| AWARDED | |

| GOLDEN PAW | DATE |
|------------------|------|
| Wolf Cub Law | |
| Wolf Cub promise | |
| 6 Pack Meetings | |
| Old Wolves names | |
| AWARDED | |

| GREEN PAW | DATE |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 10 Leaves or Flowers | |
| Painting | |
| 3 ways to care for Environment | |
| AWARDED | |

| BADGES AWARDED | DATE |
|-----------------------|------|
| Artist Badge | |
| Athlete Badge | |
| Bookworm Badge | |
| Collectors Badge | |
| Cooks Badge | |
| Craft Badge | |
| Entertainer Badge | |
| Gardener Badge | |
| House Orderly Badge | |
| Local Guide Badge | |
| Swimmer Badge | |
| Weather Watcher Badge | |
| 1 Year Service | |
| 2 Year Service | |
| Joining Wolf Cubs | |

Personal Information

| |
|---------------------|
| Surname |
| First Names |
| Address |
| |
| Telephone |
| Date of Birth |
| Date Joined |
| Age on Joining |
| Previous Service |
| School |
| Religion |
| Parents or Guardian |