



The Senior Section

Uniform through the ages

2016 marks the centenary of guiding's oldest age group for young members with a year of nationwide celebrations called The Senior Section Spectacular.

Today, The Senior Section is a way for girls and young women aged 14 - 26 to enjoy fun, friendship and making their mark on the world. Since it was established in 1916, the section has had a variety of different names and uniforms. Girlguiding Scotland's Scottish Archives Team takes a look at its evolution:

Senior Guides, 1916

In 1916 some of the girls who had been the first to join the Guides were getting too old for their companies but didn't want to leave the movement. So to make room for younger girls who wanted to join, patrols of Senior Guides were formed for girls over the age of 16. At the same time, Cadet Companies were formed in schools for girls wishing to train as Leaders.



The Senior Guides wore the same uniform as the Guides with a few changes. The hat band had a trefoil badge and the tenderfoot badge, on a red felt background, was worn over the trefoil in the centre of the hat. Girls who had been Patrol Leaders could keep their stripes but wore a cross-bar of white braid over them to show they no longer held office.

Senior Guides were either trained in a Senior Patrol in an existing company or formed a separate unit. The 1917 guiding handbook 'Policy, Organisation and Rules' said it aimed to enable older girls "to keep in touch with the ideals of the Guide Movement and to have the opportunity of obtaining badges of a higher class, such as will fit them for their work in life".

'Policy, Organisation and Rules' and 'The Guiding Manual' have been used to verify dates and uniform changes on these posters.



Cadets, 1916 - 1967

Cadets grew out of a desire for some girls who were outgrowing Guides but wanted to train as Leaders. They either wore their school uniform or their Guide uniform with a white hat band and dark triangular tie.

Cadets were originally a separate branch of guiding, but in 1927 they merged into the Ranger branch under the title Cadet Rangers.



In 1954 Cadets wore:

- A regulation blue blouse
- A navy blue skirt
- A navy battle dress
- A navy beret
- Regulation colour stockings
- A white tie
- A blue and white investiture badge, worn on the tie after investiture
- A flash on a blue background, worn on both shoulders of the battle dress
- Some Cadets wore white plastic clip-on ties, too, especially when camping!





Rangers, 1920 - 1967

A new name

When it was decided that the Senior Guides needed a new name, suggestions in the Girl Guides' Gazette of November 1919 included Citizen Guide, Pioneer, Pilot and Rover. In the end Chief Guide Olave Baden Powell decided that her husband Robert Baden-Powell's suggestion of Rangers was most suitable, and the new name was approved at a conference of County Commissioners in 1920.

Gradually the section evolved into Land, Sea or Air Rangers depending on each unit's interests and the area where they were based.

War service

During the two World Wars, Girlguiding members provided vital support for war service projects, from collecting scrap to training in First Aid and relaying messages. Older girls even worked for MI5. The movement also raised money for recreation huts and ambulances for soldiers in the field. Guides were used as runners at the Peace Treaty of Versailles and 16 Senior Guides were invited to witness the signing of the Treaty in 1919.

In 1940 all Rangers over the age of 15 were encouraged to work in the newly-formed Home Emergency Scheme (HES). The aim of the HES was to train girls "to help in meeting the needs of the country during wartime". The training demanded high standards of discipline, fitness and all-round usefulness and was the forerunner of the Rangers' Pre-Service Training. Qualified Rangers had their names entered on a register and were issued with an HES armband which they wore for the duration of the war.



Guide and Ranger War Service, WW1



Guide and Ranger War Service, WW2



Ranger Home Emergency Service, WW2



Sea Rangers, 1920

Originally known as Sea Guides, this branch of guiding became known as Sea Rangers when it merged with Ranger Guides and Cadets in 1927.

The Sea Guides were formed to provide a variation on ordinary Guide training to retain older girls, create activities which would help to attract new members and supply ex-members of the Women's Royal Naval Service - known as the Wrens - with a way of continuing their service to the nation.

From 1920, Sea Rangers wore:



- A navy blue skirt and jumper, with the option of an ordinary Guide jumper
- A navy blue linen hat with a white cover worn from May to September
- A cap ribbon embroidered with the words 'Sea Rangers'
- A tie which was black or company colours
- A dark blue enamel trefoil
- A brown leather belt
- A dark blue lanyard with a boatswain's whistle - changed to white in 1938
- A royal blue woggle



One of the most famous Sea Rangers was Princess Elizabeth, our present Queen. She later became Sea Ranger Commodore and Chief Ranger. Her sister Princess Margaret later took on this role.

On 15 June 1953 Sea Rangers took their place on the River Thames in a naval review to celebrate the Queen's coronation.



Air Rangers, 1943 - 1967

The Air Rangers were formed in 1943 and their units were named after flights. From 1943 - 1953 the uniform consisted of:

- A navy blue skirt
- A pale blue shirt or jersey
- A black triangular tie worn scarfwise with County/Thistle badge on the back
- A pale blue woggle
- A navy blue beret with an embroidered trefoil over the left eye
- A brown belt, shoes and stockings



From 1953 - 1957 the uniform remained the same with the addition of a navy blue battle dress and brown or navy gloves. For air work, Air Rangers wore navy blue wool slacks with a jersey or shirt. A navy blue boiler suit was worn for heavy work.

In 1957 an optional navy blue cardigan was added. Air Rangers wore a forage cap or beret with a pale blue embroidered trefoil on wings and had a navy blue armlet and neutral-coloured stockings.





Land Rangers, 1943 - 1967

In 1943, Rangers were renamed Land Rangers in keeping with the other two branches of Sea and Air Rangers.

Land Rangers wore:

- A navy skirt, grey long-sleeved jersey and a long-sleeved grey blouse in summer
- A navy blue battle dress
- A navy triangular tie worn scarfwise, held by a red woggle
- A navy blue beret or forage cap with a red embroidered trefoil worn above the left eye
- A red enamel tenderfoot badge
- Brown stockings and brown shoes
- The option of grey or brown socks
- Hair was worn off the collar





Senior Branch, 1967 - 1990

In 1967 Land, Sea and Air Rangers amalgamated with Cadets to become Senior Branch.

The uniform consisted of:

- An aquamarine open-necked shirt
- A navy skirt
- A navy jacket
- The option of a navy pinafore
- An air hostess-style hat trimmed in aquamarine
- A navy cardigan
- An aquamarine Promise badge
- Neutral-coloured tights and shoes of brown, black or navy blue

There was also an alternative activity uniform consisting of:

- A skirt, slacks, jeans or shorts
- An official pattern aqua t-shirt
- A regulation blue camp dress
- A blue camp hat





The Senior Section, 1990 - 2000

In 1990 The Senior Section's uniform - along with all Girlguiding uniforms - was given a makeover by designer Jeff Banks.

It became a mix and match of:

- A hoodie
- A woollen sweater
- A shirt with a pocket
- A sweatshirt
- A polo shirt
- And a baseball cap

... all in an aqua colour, teamed with navy joggers, skirt or shorts.





The Senior Section, 2000 - present day

The year 2000 saw another change in uniform, this time designed by British designer brand Ally Capellino.

Current members of the section have a mix and match choice of:

- A formal blouse - which must be worn with a smart black skirt or trousers for formal occasions
- A polo shirt
- A rugby shirt
- A hoodie

...all in blue, aqua, ice blue or moss grey with a fabric 'badge tab' worn on the right hand side. These are worn with the girls' choice of trousers, shorts or skirt.

Neckerchiefs are optional for casual wear, and there is also a baseball cap which is not officially part of the uniform. A navy blue suit and tiled or plain scarf can also be worn.

Peer Educators, trained members of The Senior Section who run sessions for their peers on issues such as body confidence and bullying, also have their own t-shirt to wear when delivering training.

