

1st P&P Post

No. 23
January 2016

A Word from the Chair

The autumn term certainly rushed past but that probably means that we were very busy enjoying ourselves delivering great Scouting. This included big events such as Family Camp (including the Group AGM) and our Carol Service. And the really important week-to-week delivery of exciting programmes. A quick look at the 1st P&P Facebook page shows a great cross-section of what has been going on.



The Executive works to support the programmes, activities and camps by making sure that we are well resourced for finance and equipment and we are delighted to welcome four new members who were appointed at the AGM. We are also busy updating our web site; there is still work to do, but you can already see the emerging site at www.1stpandp.org.uk

An important note for all parents is that we are changing the way that we collect membership subscriptions. We have trialled the use of OSM 'online finance' in the past term and it has worked well. We will 'convert' all money collection to that starting in the New Year; we have already written asking that standing orders be cancelled and will be contacting you very soon about the new payment arrangements.

Finally, on behalf of the Group Executive, I wish you a great 2016. And our huge thanks to every adult who supports the

Group in any capacity – there are too many of you to name you individually (apologies for that) but your contribution is hugely valued – THANK YOU VERY MUCH INDEED.

Hamish Stout, Chair of the Group Executive Committee

Carol Service 2015

The Group Carol Service is always a popular event in the run up to Christmas. This year's service was very well attended and the collection raised £82.82 for Project Africa.

Thank you to all the Sections for contributing: the Beaver Scouts for leading Away in a Manger; the Cub Scouts for writing and leading the prayers; the Scouts for the readings; the Explorer Scouts for leading the service and for their video contribution and, in particular, the Scouts and Explorers in the band, who gave up considerable time before the event to practise. Thank you also to Kathryn Tolson and Claire Ham for their help in the run up to the service and the Group Executive Committee for providing and serving the refreshments.

Queen's Scout Award



Congratulations to Harry Archer, the first member of the Group ever to achieve the Queen's Scout Award – the top award in Scouting. He received the award from the County Commissioner, Nigel Bevan, at the Group Carol Service.



BEAVERS

Water Voles Colony

The start of the autumn term saw the Water Voles working towards their Space Activity badges. They were lucky enough to receive a visit from the Berkshire Astronomy Society who taught them all about the solar system and constellations and

answered their many questions about space.

The rest of the term was spent learning about different religions with an evening on Diwali, where the Beaver Scouts decorated tea light holders and the new Beavers were invested by candlelight. We also learnt about meditation: a lovely quiet evening was had by the Leaders when Mike Sarsons came from the local Catholic Church and taught the Beavers all about the benefits of meditating.

We have learnt about animals this term with a visit from Feather and Furs. The lovely lady brought her three feathered friends along and the Beavers were allowed to hold and pet them. The highlight of the evening was when all the Beavers lay down on the floor and one of the owls swooped down over them, causing lots of screams of delight.



We also received a visit from George from the Hearing Dogs who taught us all about how the dogs can help deaf people. He gave us a great demonstration with his own dog, showing us how he would wake him in an emergency and how he gets him when the doorbell rings.

We ended the term with some Christmas crafts, creating Beaver carol singers for the St James the Less Christmas Tree event. Then to finish the whole term we had a Christmas party with games and food.

We have sent 5 Beavers off to Cubs We wish Jamie, Zachary, Ben, Adam and George luck in their future Scouting and look forward to welcoming the new Beavers who will take their place.

Tic Tac (Colleen Hughes), Beaver Scout Leader

Polecats Colony

The Polecats Colony expanded in September, growing to 28 members and our programme has been as busy as ever.

We started the term with visits from some of the Explorer Scouts who had been on adventures to Japan and Uganda over the summer holidays. Hannah told us all about her experiences at the World Scout Jamboree and her home hospitality stay in Tokyo, and our Young Leader Malak (Ella) told us all about her work for Project Africa. The Beavers were enthralled!

We spent an evening thinking about survival skills; the Beavers used matches to light a candle, made water filters to clean up dirty water, learnt how to treat cuts and scratches and practised their knot tying. Just before half term we got creative making bird feeders and Ben, Owen, Jacob, Reid and Talia were invested.

We started back after half term with a nice dark walk to the woods to gather sticks for a fun evening making stick-men. The Beavers learnt about good and bad food, making yummy pizzas with healthy toppings. They also started off (or added to) their own camp blankets spending an evening sewing on their first badges.



Our final Monday night meeting of the year was the District Carol Service, held at St Michael's Church in Tilehurst. Jessica and Amera were invested in the dark outside the church.

Sunshine (Fran Jones), Assistant Beaver Scout Leader



cubs

Heron Pack

It was another busy term for the Heron Cubs, starting off with a games evening. The Cub Scouts completed their Local Knowledge badge through a variety of activities, including making a coat of arms and writing about a local famous person. They also spent two evenings learning about disability awareness; thanks to Gill Denton for helping with this and for highlighting some of the issues linked to disability.

Halloween was 'celebrated' with lots of games, most of them involving eating (chocolate game, doughnut eating etc.). We also did the ever-popular tin can cooking. Although a lot of the Cubs spent the time trying to keep their candle lit, most of them did get to eat some sausage, bacon and pancake (thank you to Nathan's Dad for kindly supplying the food).

The Cubs spent two exhausting weeks fully deserving their fitness challenge badges, kindly organised by the Young Leaders. They were also excited to have a visit from Drew the Guide Dog and sat and listened really well to an interesting and informative talk from her owner Richard all about the work of the Guide Dog Association.



We finished the term off with a Christmas jumper party and disco. The Cubs enjoyed a game of pass the parcel, musical chairs etc and of course eating lots of food. Thank you to the Cubs for representing the Group at the Remembrance Day Parade, we had lots of positive comments about how well behaved they all were. Thank you also to all the Leaders, Young Leaders and parents for all your continued support in providing our young people with some amazing opportunities.

Akela (Gareth Evans), Cub Scout Leader

Kingfisher Pack

The autumn term always seems to be one of the busiest. We spent as much of the first few weeks outside as possible and when it got dark polished up our first aid skills. Family Camp was a massive highlight and gave the Pack a real buzz. Teamwork took up the next couple of weeks with Cubs researching and working together to present information on some of the smaller countries involved in the Rugby World Cup. This was reinforced by three of our Sixers attending the District Sixers' training course and then leading the Pack Forum where we reviewed the new badges and discussed what we'd like to do this year.

The pumpkins we sowed in the spring were harvested and carved by each Six for Halloween. In the two weeks running up to Remembrance Day the Pack, and the rest of the Group, sold poppies in the village raising over £450. We marked Remembrance Day with an evening talking about those who had

done their best including Jack Cornwell and Fred Potts and had a great turn out for Remembrance Day parade. The attitude and behaviour of the Pack on the day was exemplary and I have



rarely been more proud. Following a great night hike to Purley we made some Christmas crafts, marshmallow snowmen and knotted Christmas trees. The Carol Service was our last meeting of 2015 and left everyone suitably festive!

Akela (Matt Shakespeare), Cub Scout Leader



SCOUTS

Friday Night Troop

The Friday Scouts were very competitive last term! The term started with a fire building competition with the aim being to pop a water balloon in the least time. They also had a paper plane competition with prizes for furthest distance, most time in the air and most acrobatic and the Scouts held a mock election with a big box of chocolates for the winner. Each Patrol presented a manifesto as to why they deserved the chocolates and a vote was held at the end.

The Scouts spent some time thinking about the favourite activities that they have done and what they would like to do in the future and compiled them into a Scout newsletter. The young people also took control of the programme, with the Patrol Leaders running a very successful evening with various bases, including eating challenges, quizzes and problem solving.

They have also been busy pioneering, with tasks which have included fabricating a long enough torch to burn through string to rescue a prize and creating ball carriers to complete a progressively harder obstacle course.

Graham Green, Scout Leader



Monday Night Troop

In September we welcomed 6 new members from Cubs into our Section, and kicked off the term with some craft, making lanterns intended for the upcoming Family Camp which was well attended by members of the Troop. We then had a couple of weeks discovering what the World Scout Jamboree was like in Japan, how the Project Africa team helped improve the lives of school children in Uganda, and whether the Explorer Scouts' lives had been changed too.

We concentrated on first aid last term, which we will continue

and finish this term, and also got outside a couple of times despite the dark and damp weather for a few games outside or in Sulham woods. In partnership with the Friday Troop we entered two teams in the District's Big Breakfast competition. We held a practice session at Hardwick Estate which clearly paid off: well done to Ashlyn, Grace, Lara and Robert for coming third. Several of the Scouts used their musical skills at the end of the year to take part in the band for the Group Carol

Service. At the end of term we went to a trampoline park for a bit of a bounce, and some of the Scouts demonstrated that their gymnastic skills have improved in leaps and bounds!



At half term we said goodbye to Phil Curtis who has left the Scout Troop. I would like to thank Phil for all the work he put into running and helping with the Troop for over 13 years. He ran the Troop almost single handed for many years, and has been a big

inspiration for the rest of the Leaders that have joined him. We are really looking forward to 2016, and hope to run a wide range of adventurous activities in the coming year. We are expecting the Troop to keep growing in the coming months, so any adult support either on a Monday, or for some of our outdoor activities, would be a great help.

Jez Jones, Scout Leader

Big Breakfast 2015

Taking part in the big breakfast was great fun, although it was a bit cold! First we had to make fire, then we cooked food on the fire. We burnt the bread a bit, but we still managed to come third!

Robert, Scout



EXPLORERS

Our Explorer Unit headed into the festive break in good health with several new members having joined our growing Unit this term. Erika, Freya, Sam and Luke started in September, and, more recently, we have welcomed Rachel, Lucy and Debs.

Our programme last term covered a range of activities from driving to entrepreneurial skills alongside the more traditional hikes, outdoors cooking and games evenings.

In September, we visited the Lamborghini garage in Pangbourne for "Silence of the Lambos" evening, at which we invested Ellis, Mikey and Joshua. Thanks to Craig Cairns for allowing us to get up close and personal with a selection of Lamborghinis, as well as a look around Aston Martin and Bentley.

We followed up that trip with a Driving School evening, thanks to Dave Pickering, who taught the Explorers about basic highway maintenance – including how to change a tyre.



In October half term, 16 of the Unit attended Wales camp. We made the most of our week, visiting the Aberdulais Tin Mine, Neath Abbey, the famous Dan-yr-Ogof caves, Henrhyd Falls

(otherwise known as the entrance to the Batcave!), Oakwood theme park and the sights of Swanse. Into the second half of the term, a Dragon's Den style challenge offered the Explorers the chance to sharpen their business skills as they developed, branded and pitched a new product. The end results may not make it into Britain's shops but it was entertaining nonetheless!

We were pleased to support the Thameside Fireworks Fiesta in November, selling toffee apples and giving the Unit a presence in the local community.



We had an energetic evening at Gravity Force in December, while also having a strong turn-out at the Group Carol service, which allowed us to look back on some outstanding success for our Unit – with Summer and Maddie receiving their Platinum Awards and Harry receiving his well-earned Queen's Scout Award.

A special Christmas lunch – prepared by our own Head Chef Goodyear – ended the year in style but we are now ready for an even bigger year for the Unit in 2016!

Chris Hughes, Explorer Scout Leader