

1st P&P Post

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GSL's Report

Well, here we are at the end of yet another term! And, as always, a fabulously active one. Despite losing a Scout Leader at the beginning of term, the third Troop continues to provide a fun, active programme and my thanks to those who have 'stepped up' to make this happen. You can read more about specific activities below but there have been many trips 'out' from Fire Stations to the Houses of Parliament and guests coming in to visit us. Pancakes were a feature on most programmes!

Before going back for the summer term, we held our St. George's Day Parade. For the first time, we held it locally, down by the river and had a fabulous turnout – thank you!

Next term, with the lighter evenings, there will be even more activities outdoors during the week and some camps to look forward to.

Suzanne Stout, Group Scout Leader

A Word from the Chair

Many great things have been going on during spring term and all are well documented on our P&P Facebook page. One important milestone to mention here is that the past term has seen the start of our Thursday Scout Troop so we now have 2 Beaver Colonies, 2 Cub Packs, 3 Scout Troops and the Explorer



Scout Unit based in Purley and Pangbourne.

Every year, on 31st January, The Scout Association has a census to take a membership snapshot; this year we recorded 52 Beavers, 55 Cubs, 70 Scouts and 24 Explorers. We also recorded 28 adults working directly with the young people, and another 9 working to support them. Of course we have many other adults who support in so many ways. We owe a HUGE debt of thanks to all who help to deliver great programmes, or provide invaluable background support.

Two other quick mentions:

1. In the second week of May OSM will initiate payments for summer term membership subscriptions. Your prompt

attention to this will be greatly appreciated.

2. I hope that you have our Group Family Camp firmly in your calendar for the weekend of 16/17 September. All adults attending the camp must have a current DBS disclosure obtained through Scouting – please contact Hazel Kennedy (hazelkennedy@hotmail.com) to arrange this if you haven't already done so. By acting early we anticipate we can avoid having to have a last minute panic!

Finally ... enjoy summer term!

Hamish Stout, Group Chair



BEAVERS

Water Voles Colony

The Water Voles had a fun start to 2017, with a YouShape evening where they brainstormed what activities they would like to do during the year. The common theme was a "Pie Face" evening so the following week we made that a reality. This was followed by an evening on National Cheese Day; the Beavers had great fun rolling babybels and eating a variety of cheeses. Further to our YouShape programme, some of the Beavers had requested to learn to sew on their badges and iron their neckers so we dedicated two evenings to doing just that. Two Beavers had already learnt how to sew a badge on as part of their personal challenge so loved being able to show off their new skills and help the other Beavers. It was surprising how much they all enjoyed it and they were so pleased with their new skill.

The Beavers also gained 2 new badges this term: Digital Citizen, learning about computers, sending an email and making a PowerPoint presentation; and Cyclist, where Bubbles and Keo



helped them make sure their bikes were safe, showed them how to fix a puncture and they enjoyed cycling around a course in the dark. We ended the term with a lovely walk through Pangbourne searching for answers to an Easter Quiz.

Some of the younger Beavers were lucky enough to go and visit one of the Scout Patrol Camps. Lots of fun was had; thank you Ringtail for organising a great day out. Additionally, at the beginning of the Easter holidays it was lovely to see so many Water Voles come along for the hike to Purley along the river.

Thank you to those parents who have kindly given up their time this term to help us. Without your invaluable support we wouldn't be able to offer such a varied, exciting programme.

Tic Tac (Colleen Hughes), Beaver Scout Leader

Polecats Colony

What a busy term it was! The Polecats started off by celebrating the Chinese New Year: complete with lanterns, a chopstick challenge, food tasting and fortune cookies. They then spent some time working on the health and fitness activity badge: playing agility games, measuring their heart rates and making healthy snacks of muffin-based pizzas and fruit salad.

After half term, we spent an evening learning about our founder, Robert Baden-Powell, and seven new Beavers were invested into the Colony. The Beaver Scouts then focused on the communicator activity badge for a few weeks: finding out about Alexander Graham Bell and making string telephones; inventing and building new methods of communicating; learning their addresses and phone numbers so that they could write postcards and phone home and working out how to spell their

names and send messages in Morse code. They also enjoyed a great wide game on the field, and at the final meeting before Easter they spent a creative evening decorating egg cups and mosaic crosses.



There have been a couple of great joint-Colony activities this term too, with the Polecats joining the Water Voles for a great afternoon at the Scouts' Patrol Camp and also for a super hike from Pangbourne to Purley.

Our Beaver Scouts are very keen to gain badges at the moment and lots of them have shown us their collections and told us about their hobbies. It's really great to see them so enthusiastic about things they have done at home – there are plenty more activity badges they can work on, so keep it up Beavers!

Sunshine (Fran Jones), Assistant Beaver Scout Leader



cubs

Heron Pack

We started off the term with a visit to Tesco for their Farm to Fork activity. We learnt where food is stored, what happens to deliveries and where all our food comes from.



The Cubs also completed their Teamwork badges, created some great animations and managed to finish off their Chef badges (after a very messy evening of smoothies and pizza making). A particular highlight this term was a trip to the Police Museum in Sulhamstead; the Cubs got to solve a crime, learn

about some grisly murders and find out what it's like to be a police officer.

We also focused on the Personal Challenge award and the Cubs worked hard completing their personal and Leader-set challenges. We had a disability awareness evening, kindly organised by George. The Cubs had a talk from a parent about living with autism.

At the end of March, the Cubs had a return visit to Tesco to learn all about chocolate. They started by looking round the store at how many food items contained chocolate (a lot)! They then did some very important chocolate tasting, although not many enjoyed the pure cocoa powder.

Our final evening of the term wrapped up the personal challenge badge and finished off with a massive Easter Egg hunt. We are looking forward to lots more fun activities next term, starting with some canoeing. Thank you to all the Leaders, Young Leaders and adult helpers who help make Cubs enjoyable for all.

Akela (Gareth Evans), Cub Scout Leader

Kingfisher Pack

The spring term opened with a night all about home safety. With talks from a police and fire officer as well as a gas installer and a room set up for hazard detection, the Cubs learned lots about how to stay safe at home and out and about. Burns night was celebrated with Haggis and Irn Bru, with the traditional recitation of the Ode to a Haggis. A night of YouShape Scouting helped the Leaders to plan the future; the Cubs always come up with

some great ideas. This term's night hike was very successful – we actually arrived at the barn exactly when we said that we would, and the hot chocolate with marshmallows provided by the Explorer Leaders was very welcome at the end of it – thank you.

An evening with Newbury Astronomical Society saw us studying different constellations and the moon through some amazing telescopes. The following week we made and tossed lots of pancakes - always very popular. The DIY badge saw a range of creations, the most popular being a selfie stick (look out for the all new tomato phone, coming soon to a Scout Group near you!)

We were sad to say goodbye to Connor and Molly and wish them well on their continued journey in Scouting.

The summer term always brings plenty of outdoor activities and we have two camps planned as well as plenty of activity in our garden at the school.



Bagheera (Hilary Binns), Assistant Cub Scout Leader



SCOUTS

Monday Night Troop



We had a great start to an adventurous year, with a few skills nights, learning practical stuff from fire lighting to navigation with a few knots thrown in for good measure. The knots came in handy when the Scouts had to build a tripod, attach a water filled balloon to it, then light a small fire under it to try and burn through the balloon; it was interesting to see how long it took to ignite the balloons. Knots were also very useful when they built micro-rafts which they tested by floating in a box of water.

We held a series of hikes in the first few months of this year, along with the Thursday and Friday Troops, mainly just to get everybody out and walking and learning to navigate, but also as a practise for the annual Three Towers Hike competition which was held a little earlier this year on the 1st April. The Monday Troop team of Grace, Ashlyn, Lara and Lucy did very well, completing the route 30 minutes quicker than last year.

We also held our Patrol Camp on the same weekend, jointly with Thursday Troop, and had a great camp, with all the Scouts learning a great range of traditional skills and getting a chance to do lots of cooking on open fires.

We ended the term on a high and a low and a high and a low as

the Troop went trampolining at “Jump In” in Slough! Lots of bouncing in the dark and some very sweaty Scouts by the end!

I would like to thank all the parents that signed up to the parent rota last term, and all those that have agreed to help this coming term too. The additional parent support really does make a big difference – thank you.

Jez Jones, Scout Leader

Thursday Night Troop



It's really exciting to be writing the very first Section report for the new Thursday night Scout Troop! Following on from our taster sessions before Christmas, our first few meetings this term were spent getting to know each other and learning a bit more about Scouting, before our very first 12 Scouts were invested just before half term. Pang Valley District Commissioner, Grant Bailey, came along to do the investitures in the woods, in the dark and the Scouts had the opportunity to make their promises up a tree if they wanted to; as an added bonus, it was snowing – what more could you want?!

In the second half of the term we had fun both in and out of the Barn, with an evening on navigation, prior to a hike to Calcot; an evening on camping skills, before our very first Patrol Camp with the Monday Troop; an evening making our own woggles and, of course, an evening making and eating pancakes! Over Easter we joined the other Troops in London visiting the Houses of Parliament and playing Monopoly and we are looking forward to

lots more fun and a few more Scouts next term.

Fran Jones, Scout Leader

Friday Night Troop



The Friday night Scout Troop started the spring term by playing Scout "Guess Who", to find out a bit more about our new Scouts. We had a cook off competition in which each Patrol cooked a different main meal, all of which were pretty tasty. Each Patrol took the opportunity to "personalise" their Patrols with a motto, war cry, shield, and flag. In February our local MP Alok Sharma came to visit and took questions from the Scouts during which Pangbourne Library was a hot button issue. We returned the favour by going to see him at the Houses of Parliament over the Easter break.

During March we played blind football and we also had a lot of fun jumping at Atom Trampoline Park. April saw us making ice cream in the car park and we had 9 Scouts take part in the annual Three Towers Hike. To finish off the term we held a

camp at Crays Pond where we slept in hammocks, cooked all of our food over open fires, made sausages, and did a lot of chopping with axes.

Graham Green, Scout Leader

Houses of Parliament and Monopoly



During the Easter holidays, Graham got the Scout Troops together to visit London. They enjoyed a fascinating tour of the Houses of Parliament, followed by a fun afternoon playing real-life Monopoly on foot, bus and tube! Congratulations to team 2, who managed to visit the most Monopoly properties.

"The London Scout day was fantastic! - Parliament was great - I learnt loads of facts. Monopoly was even better; you had lots of independence and you could go on the trains and buses whenever you wanted. I really enjoyed making friends with other people from different Scout groups. I'd love to go again!!!!"
Sasha, Thursday night Scout



EXPLORERS

As we return from Easter, we are gearing up for our first DofE practice expedition with 15 members of the Unit and Network. It's going to be another milestone moment.

Last term we saw some of the biggest evenings we've ever had in terms of numbers. There was an unsurprisingly large turnout for the District Cosmo's evening in February (where there's food, there are usually Explorers...), which carried a YouShape theme. We also conducted our own successful YouShape activities throughout the term with a speed-Scouting evening ("Take Me Scout") providing a light-hearted opportunity for the Unit to get to know each other's Scouting likes and dislikes.

Broomball at John Nike in Bracknell was a particular highlight of the term. The sight of 25 Explorers taking to the ice rink was fantastic fun. After that, it was a short introduction to snowboarding and the perfect occasion to invest Olly and Jake. Our third annual Marathon Camp also proved popular with 15 Explorers camping overnight at 52nd Reading, and then helping to man the water station on the Sunday morning.

"The Apprentice" evening saw the Unit invent their own fast food restaurant chains, while trips into Reading and Pangbourne



offered us a chance to get outdoors even in the chilly evenings. Storm Doris caused havoc by blocking the route back from Pangbourne – resulting in a dozen Explorers tackling an unexpected obstacle course in the form of a fallen tree. It's the unplanned activities that often deliver the best memories!

And with that, we head into the warmer summer evenings with plenty more fun and games – both planned and unplanned!

Chris Hughes, Explorer Scout Leader