

Newsletter - First News - Autumn 2007

Chairman's report by Bill Forfar

Well what a summer we had.. a hot springtime followed by a wet, wet, wet June and July apart from the 7/7/7 when it was glorious sunshine. The 100th Anniversary year has certainly seen us take part in a whole raft of events.

- St Georges' Day - a good turnout of boys and other groups took part in the service and march through town.
- Centenary Camp - it started off in good weather on the May Bank Holiday and the activities were excellent but on Sunday didn't it blow brother!
- Jamboree in Chelmsford - three of our leaders helped run some of the activities and found it an amazing experience.
- 777 - the reunion of former members, parents and friends ran very well and was lucky with the sunniest day of the year so far.
- Sunrise ceremony in Wokingham Marketplace - many pictures of the Balloon Release to commemorate the first Scout Camp on Brownsea Island.
- Scout Camp at Hay on Wye - marvellous weather and some testing activities for both the leaders and boys.
- Cub Camp at Ellis Farm - so near yet so far from everyday life in Wokingham

Then there was the major renovation and upgrade to security at the HQ - new windows and grilles plus the safety lighting in case of Fire. What surprised us was the higher level of light there now is in the Hall even though the grilles only allow 75% of the light to enter. The safety lighting had a real test when a rainstorm between the Beaver and Scout session one Tuesday evening flooded the hall and there was a power cut. By the way your committee had budgeted for these costs in the Buildings Fund which takes a part of your subscriptions every term.

Group Scout Leader

We are still searching for a Group Scout Leader (GSL). Debs Parker and Bill Forfar have tried to share the work going to the GSL meeting once a month but it really needs a parent to take on this role and act as our representative to the District.

The main work involved is :

- Group Scout Leader meeting one evening each month and represent 1st Wokingham's views
- Provide feedback to Exec of 1st Wokingham from the GSL meeting
- Keep records for Leaders of training courses attended and required and their Service Records
- Keep track of CRB records for Parent Helpers
- Ensure 1st Wokingham Group is compliant with Scout Rules and Regulations, see P.O.R. for details

The other Leader we need is a Beaver Leader to help Becca House. The Parent Rota helps her of course but another leader would enable her to plan ahead more than she can at present. Please talk to Becca for more information about what it entails.

Scouts

Sian Gates. Scout Leader

We had an eventful summer term with lots of outdoor activities. These included:

- Canoeing on the River Thames. A very wet and rather noisy evening was enjoyed by us all in early July. On this occasion our thanks must go to all the volunteer instructors who helped make this event possible.
- Twelve lucky Scouts were able to undertake a "Try It Out" Scuba Diving course at the Central Pool in Reading. This event was only open to boys who attended the St George's Day parade. The course was arranged by Steve Capel and our thanks go to the Reading Dive Club who loaned us their equipment and provided instructors for the course.
- We enjoyed a rather fun evening building bivouacs in The Coombes woods. The shelters ranged in size from just big enough for Leo the dog, to large enough to house a small family in comfort. It was debatable whether any of them would have actually been waterproof but on a warm summers night this wouldn't have mattered.
- We had the usual summer activity of cooking on open fires. The boys tried out a couple of potential menus for the summer camp with varying degrees of success. It was unanimous amongst the boys that the Chicken Tikka Massala was much easier to cook than sausages and mash with onion gravy.
- We booked three sessions at the Wellington College climbing wall. Many of the boys had never climbed before and for some of them it was a real challenge. There were of course many who took the climbs in their stride and this will undoubtedly mean that we will have to find somewhere more challenging next year.

Thank you to all parents who have kindly helped throughout this year. Without you we would have difficulty in running many of the events. Your help and on-going support is vital to the on-going viability of the troop and we look forward to working with you in the new academic year.

Scout Camp

report from Sian Gates. Scout Leader

This year's camp was a glorious success. Despite some last minute nerves because of the very wet weather in the previous week it all went very well. The sun started shining on the day we left and didn't stop until we returned home. There were only a couple of short showers and these didn't cause any inconvenience at all because we were all in our tents asleep at the time.

The camp location was a large flat field adjacent to the River Wye. Access was a little interesting especially at the start when everything had to be brought in by tractor because the tracks were too muddy for cars and vans to come down. Thankfully this improved by the Tuesday and we could with care get cars, vans and minibuses on and off the field.

Because of the wet weather in the previous week, we were reluctant to canoe The River Wye. Instead the first canoeing group had the opportunity to canoe on the Brecon and Monmouthshire Canal which they thoroughly enjoyed. The second group did canoe on the River once we had canoed it ourselves to check what the flow was like. This made life a lot easier as we took the canoes up to Galsbury and then the boys canoed back down to the campsite where we had our own launch facilities.

The horse riding received a mixed reception from us all. Very few of the boys had been horse riding before and most of the leaders were not keen riders either. All the boys and many of the available leaders did however give it a go and some good fun was had along the way. There were however some rather funny sights when we got off the horses at the end of our two hour ride.

Climbing was combined with mountain biking this year. There was rather a long walk into the climb location so bikes were hired to get the boys in and out more quickly. This also meant that we could take the non-climbers off for a bike ride rather than have them hanging around at the bottom of the rock face waiting for their turn. The bikes came back very muddy and so did many of the boys. The climb location was excellent with good views from the top of the rock face and a good choice of climbs for the boys to undertake. A good day with many very tired scouts on the return journey.

This year we decided to take a full day hike on the hills instead of the usual half day hike. The walk was split into two sections, one high level and one low level. The weather was fantastic and the views were spectacular. At the end we enjoyed a much needed ice cream from what must have been the luckiest ice cream van in the Black Mountains that day. The older boys were given the opportunity to go on an overnight camp after the hill walking. We camped alongside a small river in one of the valleys close to Capel-Y-Fin. The boys pitched their tents and then cooked food on Trangias instead of the usual gas stoves. For many this was their first taste of Trangia cooking. It was a good night apart from the midges which unfortunately found all of us very tasty!

On Friday we let the Scouts loose in Hereford for some retail therapy and then took them to the local swimming pool to clean up before coming home on the Saturday. This is an annual ritual which the boys look forward to because they haven't seen shops or hot running water in over 6 days! Friday evening sees the official camp bonfire and also the end of camp BBQ. As a general rule we feed the Scouts more than they can possibly eat and then have a good old fashioned sing song around the fire. This almost certainly ensures that the boys go home on a happy note and they usually forget about any hiccups that they've had previously in the week.

Next year's camp is from 26th July to 2nd August. We are going to the Isle of Purbeck in Dorset. More details will be available shortly.

Cubs

Deb Parker. Cub Scout Leader

We had an interesting term with a lot going on, though not as much outdoors activity as we would have liked. It was a miserable summer that is for sure.

The boys in the first part of term finished off their Scientist Badge, and with the results just coming in of the tallest sunflowers, we can get the badges. Yes quite a few of them did grow which shows what keen gardeners we have.

We did the normal activities like up to the The Coombs woods for tracking and a wide game, luckily it wasn't the Tuesday with heavy rain. Plus thanks to the dads that helped me out on the leadership front. We did fire lighting and all ate burnt sausages, I do keep telling them a bit of charcoal is good for them. They also made their own burgers for July the 4th which went down well.

We had a visit from Steve Jarvis who once was a leader with us and now lives in New Zealand, plus his son Tom. Steve got talked into running a cub pack in Arrowtown, New Zealand, so we have a lovely display of things at the back of the hall that we got sent. The boys presented Arrowtown with an old 1st Wokingham group flag which I sewed a lot of badges to. So Steve took it back with him. Plus this term the boys did their own video which I have sent them too. The boys did really enjoy that evening that is for sure.

The other 3 major things that happened last term were:

1) District (Scouting Centenary) camp, which took place as most of you know over the May bank holiday when it just rained and rained. I have never sent boys home before but it was horrible. Well done to those scouts who helped us clear up on the Monday, plus to the boys who coped so well. Just thank goodness we had one

good day Saturday where they did do some activities.

2) Father and son Camp (what a large turn out). Again the weather went against us on the Saturday but you all coped so well, even when I made you go on a night hike when the skies decided to really chuck it down. The rest of the day we did some silly bits as well as some more serious activities. I hope you enjoyed the rifle shooting. Sunday we calmed down a bit, think we needed to with the night the dads had had!! They all cooked a wonderful lunch on open fires. I do apologise to all the companies that had a man down on the Monday too. But for us leaders, thank you for a fantastic weekend.

3) Last thing was our summer camp where at last the weather gods were smiling on us. We had our normal great weekend with a lot of help and doing all the normal things that we do on camp. The boys were a good lot and all worked really hard together, which is fantastic to see. We even turned some of them round from really not wanting to be there, to actually crying when home time came along and refusing to leave. (can't be bad)

Cub Camp

report from Alastair McRae

On Saturday the 25th of August some of the Cub scouts of first Wokingham Cub group went to Cub camp. In the morning of the Saturday we were shown around the campsite and were told the rules. Then we had to put up the tents. It was fun putting up the tents because it made us all work as a team. Then we had a picnic lunch. Everyone was really excited about playing different games and doing different activities. One of the best games was capture the flag. It was also good fun sitting around a campfire singing campfire songs. We went for a hike on the Sunday.

We all really enjoyed Cub camp and we thank the leaders for giving up their time!

Beavers

Becca House. Beaver Scout Leader

Last term was really exciting. We had the honour of designing the 1st Wokingham Flag for the District Centenary Camp. We used a combination of four different designs and this was transferred onto a canvas flag by Richard. We attended the Centenary camp with 8 beavers who now take great pride in wearing their new scarves, especially as they don't have to worry about getting them the right way round!!! I would like to say that despite the weather etc., they behaved incredibly well and they all had a great time.

This term we have planted sunflowers, learned how we can Reduce, Reuse and Recycle and looked at Aviation. We ran an evening on Canada in an effort to welcome Jenn (who is Canadian) and learn more about Canada from her. We are also ran a joint evening with 1st Chalfont Rainbows where we learned about tracking and laid trails.

We have been working on our Hobby badge. The hobbies have included fossil collections, wonderful K'Nex constructions, talks about Tae Kwon Doe and displays of football trophies & medals.

777

An afternoon and evening of celebration was organised to celebrate 25 years of scouting at our Redlands Park Farm headquarters.

Boys from the group and their families were joined by leaders, former leaders and former members including 86 year old Frank Day who with his three brothers were some of the first members of 1st Wokingham Scouts.

Steve Jarvis a former leader and his son Thomas travelled from New Zealand to join us. Steve dedicated a mess tent to remember his father Mike who was also a leader who died tragically in a climbing accident.

The town mayor Councillor Brian Willis with his wife Ann cut a cake shaped like the hut that had been made by Bill Forfar. Refreshments were enjoyed by everyone and the evening ended with a sing sing around the camp fire.

Forthcoming Events

For full details about these events then please visit our web site at

<http://www.firstwokingham.org.uk/group/events> or look on the notice board in the entrance hall to the HQ.

7th Nov 2007	Social	Fireworks Evening (HQ)
8th Mar 2008	Fundraising	Quiz Night (HQ)
5th May 2008	Fundraising	May Fayre (Wokingham Town Centre) We will need some parental help so please plan ahead to be free

4th Jul 2008	Social	AGM & BBQ (HQ)
26th Jul - 2nd Aug 2008	Boys	Scout Camp (Isle of Purbeck, Dorset)
22nd to 25th Aug 2008	Boys	Cub Camp (Ellis Hill Farm)
or		
23rd to 26th Aug 2008		

QUIZ Follow up

The Quiz was held on 10th March 2007 and one of the questions was:

Q: What artificial stimulant was banned at the World Worm Charming Championships?

A: Washing up liquid.

Some people did not believe that there was such a contest so we reproduce the following:

World Worm Charming Championships, Cheshire held on 30th June 2008.

For the 28th year, championship charmers will gather at Willaston primary school, near Nantwich, to coax worms out of a 10 ft-square (3 mtr-square) bit of ground using "vibrations" alone. Tom-tom drumming, fiddle-playing, garden fork-twanging ... everything but digging is allowed - and the world record is 511 worms in the allotted 30 minutes (by a chap called Shufflebottom).

Are you a budding Quiz Master?

Is there anyone out there who would like to set next year's mental test? By changing the Quiz Master(s) it ensures the subjects are varied. All it takes is 8 rounds of 10 questions and a longer one for the "marathon". Don't be shy just contact one of the leaders.

WANTED AD

1) In the kitchen of our hut we have various pieces of equipment that we have purchased or have been donated by parents/friends of the group, e.g. refrigerator, coffee machine. We now find that our microwave has broken completely and the electric cooker is not very efficient.

If anyone has a working microwave or electric cooker with grill that they are disposing of then please consider donating them to the group.

2) Second Hand Kit

When the boys grow out of kit, shirts, jumpers, waterproofs, etc., the under-sized kit usually gets thrown away. We are looking to start up again, a second hand kit stock so that others can benefit from good quality unwanted items. To do this we need a parent to take charge of this for us. Is anyone willing to do this? If you are please contact one of the leaders.

1st Wokingham Tea Towel

Our Group Centenary tea towel, made from unbleached cotton and supplied in a cellophane sleeve, is now available at £3.50 each, or £3 if you buy 2 or more. A sample is on the noticeboard in the entrance hall of the hut. If you would like to order, please hand in this form and payment to any leader.

I would like to ordertea towel(s).

Name:

Telephone Number:

Section: Beavers Cubs Scouts: (please tick appropriate section)

Email:

Please make cheques payable to 1st Wokingham (St. Paul's) Scout Group