

Scouter in Charge Report for 2006

January 2006 saw the reopening of our Beaver colony after having had to close for 2 terms due to a leader shortage. We reopened with 4 brand new, enthusiastic Beaver leaders (Clare, Louise, Phyl and Sarah), Mark carried on as colony assistant and the 10 remaining boys who had previously been in the colony, the others all having had their 8th birthdays and gone up to the cub pack. Within a few weeks more boys had been taken in off the waiting list and the numbers rose to the maximum allowed of 24.

The Beavers had a very active year. They went on a day trip to Gilwell with all the other beaver colonies and cub packs in the district where they had a try at rockets, grass sledging and abseiling. In November they had a joint spooky and sparklers sleepover with the 28th Beavers. This was great fun and the boys had a fantastic time, all sleeping in the Crondall HQ together.

They have worked very hard on badges and most boys have obtained the new beaver badges of Air Activities, Healthy Eating and Imagination. We are particularly pleased that five boys have been awarded their Chief Scout Bronze Award, which has been the result of a lot of hard work over the year. They are really keen and having great fun. A big thank you to the boys and their parents for their support.

2006 was the 90th birthday of Cub Scouting and our cubs certainly celebrated in style. They were given 90 challenges to complete over the year, ranging from eating doughnuts without licking their lips to building model towers using 90 twiglets, from shaking left hands with as many people as possible in 90 seconds to taking part in a 90 minute sponsored silence. Nobody completed all 90 challenges, we didn't even attempt the sponsored silence one(!) but nearly all the other challenges were done by some of the boys.

The cub pack has remained more than full throughout the year with 38 cubs, under the expert care of Kathy, Anne, Kathy, Kevin and myself.

They have had a very varied and active programme with 4 camps, a trip to the pantomime and the fire station, the day out at Gilwell and donutting in Aldershot, an evening of judo and Ready Steady Cook. The May Bank Holiday camp at Chalfont Heights was unfortunately on the wettest 2 days of the entire year but in contrast the sixer and seconder camp, run jointly with some of the scouts was very hot. The boys travelled to the campsite and back by canoe and visited the army show. The summer camp was held at Lees Wood in Hertfordshire. The highlight in the autumn term was winning the District Swimming Gala.

The Scout troop has grown over the last year to 28 now, with 7 on the waiting list. Chris came in to help Graham and very recently Martin has joined the team. That means that there will soon be 3 uniformed leaders but, as the troop is so big, more help is still needed to run the weekly activities and to keep a good programme going.

They took 15 scouts, 1 beaver and 3 adults to Brownsea Island last May bank holiday, and did patrol cooking, archery, low ropes course, and attended the church service on Sunday afternoon, where 2 scouts had to work the hand pump for the organ as there was no electricity in the church. Only 3 groups stayed on the island over night. and we were one of them.

They did a couple of night hikes staying at the hut afterwards, helped with the bag packing at Christmas, went on a St George's day trip to Basingstoke swimming complex, and for the Christmas treat went to a Xmas go-carting event.

Summer camp was in Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire. 13 scouts, 1 beaver, 2 leaders and 2 dads went. They did the climbing tower, short wall and long wall, swimming, canoeing, raft building, day trip to the American adventure theme park, and a day doing Dirt carts (off road go-carts) and quad biking, over a very long and testing course, plus the normal scout camp activities, and daily chores of cooking, washing up and finding their own wash kits to use(?)

It's not only the boys who have been earning badges and awards. Congratulations are due to both Graham for his long service award of 25 years and to Kathy Summersell for her 15 years of service to our Cub Pack. Both were presented with their certificates in January. The boys and parents owe many, many thanks to the leaders and their assistants who have given so freely of their time over the year to ensure that the youngsters have been able to participate in so many activities. With 90 boys in the group and another 78 on the waiting list (including our first 2 girls) it shows what a good job we are doing down here at Pondtail.

Looking ahead we are now in 2007, the centenary year of Scouting. 80 of us are taking part in the district camp at the end of May and 88 are going down to the New Forest H007 camp in the summer holidays, 66 of us camping for the week with the rest coming down for Sunrise Day. All sorts of other activities are planned to celebrate, culminating in a big Festival of Scouting, Live '07, being held in November in the 02 arena (Millennium dome) in London.

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