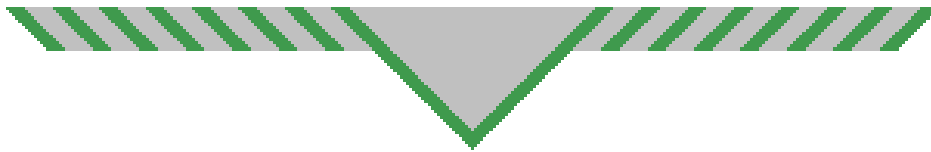


# 3<sup>rd</sup> Epsom Scout Group Official History Part 4

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Version 12  
Compiled 2022



This history has been compiled from such records such as St. Martin's Church magazine, minutes of Group committees, AGMs, log books, Exec Reports and the history of Epsom and Ewell District. Many thanks are owed to David Faulkner who compiled the majority of the history up to 1992 together with other people associated with the Scout Group, particularly the Collins family, Leslie and Edith Clark, Michael Arthur, Shirley Quemby (nee Moore) and Richard Ascough.

We hope you enjoy reading this history and feel that you then know a bit more about the Group as the longest continuous registered Group in Epsom and Ewell. Inevitably, there will be omissions and errors, therefore if anyone has any additions or corrections, however small, they would be very much appreciated.

Richard Ascough  
Group Scout Leader

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## **Part 4**

### **The 2000's**

The millennium opened with strenuous efforts being made to recruit children and leaders for Beavers and Scouts. Up to now, the Scouts had not had any girls but this was also being considered. The Scout District was helping in the search and a display of photos with an appeal was made in St. Martin's Church: also a leaflet drop locally was carried out. However, the year passed without either section re-starting.

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In the Autumn, the Cubs won their section of the District Swimming Gala, beating off strong opposition. Richard Ascough (junior) also started again as a regularly helper with the Cub Pack. His job had returned to Epsom and his son James had just joined the Pack.

2001 started on a sad note: Joanne Fernandez, our first Beaver Leader, died. Joanne had started our Beaver colony and developed it over the 10 years that she was Beaver Leader. She had also introduced and managed the supply of group sweat shirts for all members, with the St. Martin's logo.

The Cubs won the District 5-a-side football competition. The District cross-country race was cancelled because of Foot and Mouth disease restrictions.

In October, the Scout troop was restarted after a gap of a year and a half. Two new leaders, John Taylor and John (Gilbert) Gillard, were appointed and strong support was provided by Mike Buzwell, ADC (Scouts) and other helpers. There were just sufficient Cubs moving up from the pack to make it viable and Brownies and others were invited to join. In October, the new troop went to the Interlink camp with other Scouts from Surrey and the Boy Scouts of America.

In December, Rita Collins stepped down from Cub Scout Leader and Beverly Stevens took over, just in time to see through the Cubs' charity project "Love in a box" in which the Cubs donated toys, books, toiletries, sweets, etc placed with a letter in a shoe box and sent to children in war torn countries.

Another change, this time in the finances, was the introduction of Gift Aid; Income Tax on members' subscriptions could be reclaimed by the Group Treasurer and thereby increase the Group's income by about 28%. Although it took Andrew Tapson some organising to introduce, the results were well worthwhile!

In 2002 all sections had to cope with the introduction of a new training programme, re-structured to reflect the changing times in society.

The cubs held a summer camp at Gilwell Park, Epping Forest, the Headquarters of Scouting and the main Training Centre for leaders and introduced their new training programme.

In September, the Group celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary somewhat modestly during a pack meeting. Other celebrations were planned for the next year.

Also, in September, the death occurred of John Beckwith, formerly ADC (Scouts) and Deputy District Commissioner, who had been a good friend of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Epsom and helped run a summer camp for our Scouts.

At the AGM in July, Dave Faulkner stepped down as Chairman of the Group Executive and was succeeded by Howard Kay. Dave had also been acting as Chairman of the HQ Committee. Long service awards were presented to Beverly Stevens for five years and to Geoff Collins for forty years service.

The HQ was now being let out on a regular and financially productive basis to several groups and was able to manage several repairs in and around the HQ building while still maintaining a healthy balance. This was in spite of escalating heating, lighting, cleaning and insurance costs.

Unfortunately, the Scout troop's re-start had faltered due to lack of Scouts, despite the best efforts of the new leaders and had closed by the end of 2002. The Beaver colony was also

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still closed and the Cub Pack dropped to only 6 in number. The leaders of the Group (Beverly, Wayne, Richard and Geoff) met to decide on plans for the future or whether the Group should close due to low numbers. It was decided that all efforts at recruitment should be concentrated on the Beaver and Cub age range so that they would move through the sections hence be in the Group for many years.

The Group put up a very impressive display at St. Martin's Church Open Day, held a presentation from Don Wills from the Scout Association during a church Family service, contacted local schools focussing on a presentation during school assembly and placed adverts in the library and local gyms. The invitation to join was clearly inclusive of girls as well as boys but the Guide leaders were consulted beforehand to ensure the good relationship was maintained.

The Beavers were re-started in January 2003 with Beverly Stevens as Beaver Leader. The numbers rose steadily from the start and had reached 13 by April with a waiting list for future years. Fiona Pearson joined as Assistant Beaver Leader in the summer. The Cub Pack was now jointly run by Beverly Stevens, Richard Ascough and Wayne Smith who all decided to also restart the Scout Troop.

Against advice from the District, but following the Scout Association guidance for areas with low numbers, they integrated Cub and Scout meetings as the next set of 4 cubs reached scout age. The aim was that as numbers gradually grew the Scouts could develop into a separate section. Cubs would undertake Cub activities and Scouts would undertake Scout activities, with the children combining for games and some other activities. A new Scout leader, Graeme Walker joined to help Wayne and Richard in running the new Troop.

At the AGM in July, Howard Kay stepped down as Chairman after only one year for business reasons and Peter Clayton took over.

In 2004 the Lease for our Headquarters building from St. Martin's Church expired and a new lease was granted for the period of 21 years – longer than any previous lease. The church had just agreed a new lease for the St John Chandler Hall for the same period with Teddies Nurseries, owned by BUPA. At the same time, the District Scout Council had taken up a lease from St. Martin's Church for "The Forge", the former Venture Scout building at the rear of the site, which they intended to refurbish and extend. A part of the car park in front of the HQ had to be surrendered, as part of the deal, so that Teddies Nurseries could have an external play area; and a pathway, sheltered from traffic by a fence, was created next to the St John's building.

The rental was at an increased figure to reflect the increase in the rate of inflation since the previous lease was agreed and the longer period of tenure but was still well below market prices. As a consequence, the charges for letting the HQ to other bodies such as Ferndale Nursery were increased and kept under review.

At the family service in St. Martin's Church at the beginning of February, a formal Sponsorship Agreement was signed between the Vicar of St. Martin's Church and the Scout and Guide Districts, respectively, confirming the support each will provide to the other.

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Figure 1 – St George's Parade, Rosebery Park (2004)

Richard Ascough, Graeme Walker, Wayne Smith, Geoff Collins, Beverly Stevens, Rita Collins  
Kathryn Ascough, Ben Parker, Eleanor Hudson, Hannah Brice, William Clayton, Holly Parker, Andrew Vandervert,  
Alex Hudson, Luke Tyrrell, James Ascough, Daniel Clackson,  
David Pearson, Luke Giles, Alex Shepherd, Matthew Moody

At the AGM in July, it was noted that Beverly was running the Beavers and Cubs. As noted above, the Scout numbers gradually increased during the year until by the end there were 14 Scouts attending regular meetings. The Scout Troop had made their home in the Forge, still leased by the District but it was rarely used other than occasional Appointment Committee meetings about six times a year. Their plans for refurbishment and extension did not come to fruition.

Beside the 'traditional' activities for the Scouts, there were a trip to 'Laser Quest', a climbing night and two weekend camps to Boidierhurst and Broadstone Warren, near East Grinstead, respectively. Things were looking up again at last, due largely to the persistent efforts of Richard Ascough, Wayne Smith, Graeme Walker and also Danielle Stoves who started helping regularly.

Numbers of boys and girls in the 3 sections held up well in 2005 this year with 18 Scouts, 12 Cubs and 16 Beavers attending regularly. The Scout increase was due partly to Cubs moving up and the success of the programme put in place by Wayne and Richard. The Scouts went to Scoutabout, a County activity event in June and with the Cubs to the annual summer camp at Mellow Farm in July. Beverly Stevens was still leading both the Cub and Beaver sections with parental and other leader help. There was more participation in district events this year such as Cross Country, Pirate Craft Competition, Beaver Ranger day at

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Horton country park and the St George's Day celebration which this year was held at Boidierhurst campsite, Cubs night hike, district swimming gala, district football, Cubcraft and the Scout district cooking competition

During the year, the death occurred of Josie Collins, mother of Geoff and John and wife of Jack (JC), who had given such sterling service to the group over very many years. In 1951, she joined the Parents and Friends Association to help raise funds for the HQ, then she and Jack helped run the Cubs "for the time being" when the Akela retired and in 1961 Josie became CSL. In 1967, she also took on the role of District CSL and continued to help with the Cubs for many years. She was in fact the driving force behind many Group events and activities and was noted for her enthusiasm and encouragement of boys and leaders alike.

In March 2006, Leslie Clark died. He and his wife Edith had been loyal and tireless supporters of the group through the Parents and Friends Association which just after the war had acquired the land behind St John's for the headquarters building to be erected. Leslie had chaired the Association in maintaining the building, raising funds by regular jumble sales, fairs and similar events in all of which he was accompanied by Edith. Later, when the adult support roles in scouting were reorganised, and Dave Faulkner became Chairman of the new Headquarters Committee, Leslie was "promoted" to the position of President of the group, which he held for many years maintaining a strong interest in the Group's events and activities and chairing the group AGM's, until a few years before he died. Leslie had also been Chairman of the Epsom & Ewell District Scout Executive Committee.

Turning to other matters, two of our Scouts, Chloe Houghton and James Ascough, were selected to attend the forthcoming 2007 World Scout Jamboree at Hylands Park in Essex. Visits to the site were being planned for all the Scouts and Leaders. Although Jamborees are held every four years, this one was special because 2007 marked the centenary of Scouting and many plans were being made for appropriate celebrations.

On the building front, damage to the floor tiles caused partly by sand from the nursery and partly by old age - the floor was laid 40 years ago and had been showing signs of deterioration - led to a decision to replace the floor covering entirely. At the rear of the HQ, plans were developing for refurbishment of the old "Forge" building now leased to the Scout District but available for our Group's use as required and the Scouts took advantage of this. The area in front of it was cleared to provide much needed car parking space and the over-large sycamore tree was cut back radically.

The Scouts continued to flourish with Richard Ascough and Wayne Smith as joint leaders (ASLs) and they took part in all the District Scout events. In the Challenge Hike, the over-13 team came first and in the Trek Cart Challenge the troop team also came first. They also did well in the District Swimming Gala, all of which resulted in them winning the District Inter-Troop Challenge competition for the year. This was a brilliant achievement for the troop after all the earlier problems.



Figure 2 – Raft Building at Summer Camp – Stepping Stones, Box Hill (2006)  
Eleanor Hudson, Kathryn Ascough, Callum Knight

For most of the year, Beverly Stevens had continued to run Beavers and Cubs, as she had done for about 3 years but in September, a new Beaver Leader was recruited, Judith Hetherington (later Sitford). Ben Meller joined the Pack as an ACSL shortly afterwards.

The one disaster of the year was in the winter of 2006 when the ceiling of the Forge collapsed meaning the Scouts were homeless. Over the next couple of years the District, who still owned the building, refurbished the building for use by the District for meetings.

2007 was the Centenary year for Scouting. It was 100 years since our founder, Lord Robert Baden Powell, held his experimental camp on Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour for 24 boys of a wide variety of social classes to try out his ideas for training boys in woodcraft and scouting activities, based on his experience in the British army, especially in Africa. It was a huge success and boys began forming their own patrols and Scout groups across the country until the King personally asked BP to set up a formal Association - and so the Scout Association was formed.

Part of the local celebrations was an exhibition of Scouting at Bourne Hall Museum from July to September. However, the main event was 'The Sunrise Celebration' for 8.00am on 1<sup>st</sup> August. This was replicated around the world at the same local time of 8.00am.

As part of the build up to this event, the Cubs helped to run the family Service at St. Martin's Church in February, taking part in a dramatised bible reading and a playlet about Baden Powell. They gave the congregation some information about the centenary and a Scout was invested during the service.

At the end of May, several Scouts and Cubs camped with other Groups in our District and other Surrey Districts at Blacklands Farm near East Grinstead in Sussex. The event was called "*Tons of Fun*" and provided a wide range of activities such as canoeing, a climbing wall as well as some quieter table top craft making. It was visited by the Beavers as well as some 'veteran' members of the groups. Across the UK, 150 similar centenary camps took place over the Bank Holiday weekend with about 200,000 Scouts and their leaders. There was plenty of media coverage and congratulations came from politicians, other charities and many other bodies.

On 1 August, the Sunrise Celebration duly took place. Many of our Group were in camp at Boidierhurst but got up early to join others from our and other local districts to meet on Box

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Hill for an impressive corporate act of celebration. Others, who were not able to be there, took part in a similar event in the Derby Square in the centre of Epsom town, and others celebrated privately. A re-dedication Service was held at Charterhouse School in Godalming, the very place where BP as a boy practiced his early ideas of Scouting.

The Jamboree was the largest assembly at any time in Scouting's history with 40,000 participants and staff and with representatives from 158 Scout Associations, the largest ever at a World Jamboree. These numbers were swollen by an additional 10,000 visitors on 8 days of the Jamboree. The Duke of Kent and Prince William who brought a personal message from the Queen, and the Chief Scout opened the event. The Sunrise ceremony took place at 8.00am sharp, although the actual sunrise had been at about 4.30am. There was a satellite link to Brownsea Island, the site of the first camp, where Peter Duncan, Chief Scout, blew the traditional Kudu horn at 8.00am. All Scouts present renewed the Law and Promise in their own format and language and were then addressed by the present Lord Baden Powell, grandson of the founder.

Many of the Groups' Scouts, Cubs and Leaders visited the centenary Jamboree during Summer Camp, which this year had the world and its various countries as the central theme

At last, work was in progress on "The Forge" at the rear of our HQ with rewiring, ceiling repairs, redecoration and the car park between the 2 buildings levelled. The hawthorn tree was removed and hoggin laid to provide a firm surface.

At the beginning of 2008, Beaver membership had fallen to 10 although a new Experimental Badge was holding their interest. Kathryn Ascough, daughter of Richard, was now helping as a young leader. In July, six of those Beavers moved up to Cubs but they were replaced by new recruits so that the numbers remained constant. The Scout leaders were joined by Peter Sitford who had recently married the Beaver Leader Judith Hetherington.

The Scouts and Cubs had camped once again at Mellow Farm near Farnham. Activities included canoeing, rafting, archery, night hikes, hot air balloons, swimming, wide games, aerial runway and the assault course.

Some minor alterations were made to the HQ such as bricking up the old doorway at the rear, changing the front door to an aluminium one with a 'spy hole' and better security lock. Sadly, some lead flashing was stolen from the front gable and but replaced with more secure fixings. Beverly Stevens, who had been Secretary of the HQ Committee as well as Beaver/Cub leader stood down and Claire O'Farrell took her place.

The St George's Day awards included the Silver Wolf to Richard Denyer, ADC General and a former ASL and SL of this group, his first when he joined scouts as a leader over 30 years previously; and the Bar to the Silver Acorn to Geoff Collins "for further distinguished service" both as our GSL and on the District Executive Committee. Wayne Smith was presented with his 20 year service award and Ann Chapman, HQ Committee treasurer with her 15 year service award (for 19 years service!).

2009 saw the Scouts start to use the Forge again for their meetings. Over the past couple of years they had to juggle meetings with the Cubs with each section trying to do outdoor activities away from the HQ whenever possible. At other times the Scouts played games outside for the first 30 minutes until the Cubs had finished.

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The section meeting times on Thursdays were

- Beavers 5.15 till 6.15
- Cubs 6.30 till 8.00
- Scouts 7.00 till 8.45

At the Group Executive meeting in June 2009, Judith Sitford, Beaver Scout Leader, reported that there were 20 Beavers in the colony, with a healthy waiting list for the future years. An active programme included a visit to "Bazzaz" the county adventure activity for Beavers. The Cub Scout Leader, Beverly Stevens, reported a full pack of 24, which included one girl, with another girl to join shortly when room. Their activities included the District Cubcraft competition, football competition and taking part in the family service at St. Martin's Church.



Figure 3 – Beavers (including Ella Danks) Cooking Dough Twists at Bazazz (2009)

The Scouts numbered 11 led jointly by Richard Ascough, Wayne Smith and Peter Sitford. Their main recent activity had been to camp at Upton Warren Sailing Centre in Bromsgrove, run by Richard's brother Phil, where they tried out a wide variety of water-based activities as well as some caving and tunnelling. The summer camp was at Boidierhurst and four scouts with Richard Ascough went to Kandersteg, the International Scout Campsite in Switzerland, with a party of Surrey Scouts.

Another interesting development noted at this meeting was the increasing use of email and the Group website to publish information about events and activities, forms and photos. "The Forge" at the rear of the HQ, although leased to the District Scouts, was again being used extensively for our Scout activities, leaving the main hall to the more numerous Cubs.

In the summer break, after a good clear-out of redundant equipment and other stores and the creation of a new doorway in the upstairs stores, the whole HQ building was rewired to bring it up to modern electrical standards and some emergency lighting was introduced.

At the end of 2009 Beverly Stevens stepped down as Cub Scout Leader to be replaced by Ben Mellor.

## The 2010's

In 2010 Dave Faulkner reported that the income from hiring out the hall to Ferndale nursery, Epsom Players and Nam Yang (Martial Art Group) is covering the upkeep of the hall. Claire O'Farrell stepped down as secretary due to her moving to Australia. The role was taken up by Debra Kaye.

Judith Sitford reported that the 20 Beavers we now split into lodges with the Lodge Leaders "taking great pride in their roles". The Beavers were the largest contingent at the District St George's Day parade and they came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the District Bowling competition. They also have a visit to Legoland and held a charity disco for Haiti. Ben Mellor reported that there were 5 boys and 3 girls currently in the Cubs. He was now helped by 2 Young Leaders, James Ascough and Matthew Pettifer-Young. The Cubs attended SCRAM (the county Cub Scout event) held every 3 years, the District Night Hike and joined the Scouts at Broadstone Warren for the Summer Camp.

The Scouts had increased in numbers to 18, most likely due to the number of activities crammed into the year, many of which the Scouts had not done before. These included: Abseiling, Mountain Biking, Cooking, Knotting, Caving, Rock climbing on real rocks as well as indoors at Chessington, Swimming, Maintenance at the HQ, a Town Treasure Trail, a firework wide game, Ice Skating, Camp fire stunts, Learning Sign Language, First aid, Map Reading, Hiking, A number of Scout Badges, Raised money for Shelter Box (who are working in Haiti and elsewhere in the world) and their Annual Chip Survey.

This was in addition to the activities at Summer Camp at Broadstone Warren neat the Ashdown Forest: Cooking, grass-sledging, traversing wall, abseiling, human table football, swimming, archery, air rifles, pot-holing, night hike, and a trip to the Bluebell Railway and Pooh Sticks Bridge.



Figure 4 – Scouts pot-holing/caving in Merstham (2010)

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The Scouts also held a weekend 'camp' on a canal boat on the Grand Union Canal, travelling from Braunston to Weedon on boats owned by the London Narrow Boat Project. Alex Luff led his patrol to win the District Inter Troop Challenge and Jack Shaw won the County Cyclo Cross.



Figure 5 – Canal Camp, Braunston to Weedon (2010)

2010 was also the year that David Steele took over as treasurer of the Scout Group and HQ Committee.

In 2011 Ben Mellor stepped down as CSL and the role was taken on by Gilliam Webb-Smith who was supported by the young leaders and a parent rota. The Scouts continued with their blended of traditional scouting and other activities: Hikes, Pioneering, Cycling in the dark and a Fair Trade evening.

Numbers in the Beavers and Scouts had been steadily increasing but Cub numbers had significantly dropped. Likewise help was much needed at both Cubs and Beavers. It was decided to hold a 'Big Adventure' camp and for the first time to invite parents and beavers along to the summer camp. This complied with recent changes in rules for beavers camping. The Group camped at Mellow Farm where over 50 people enjoyed a weekend of fun and adventure. It allowed many of the parents to actually see what their children get up to and several became involved over the next few years.

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On the financial front David Steele, the Treasurer, reported that his analysis showed that the Group was losing money year after year, a position that was not sustainable. Subs were therefore increased across the Group and a new joining fee (£20) charged to entrants to the Scout Group to cover the cost of their scarf, Group navy T-shirt and first set of badges. Beavers were in future to pay £25 a term, Cubs £27 a term and Scouts £30 a term. A proportion of this was set aside to pay for the annual capitation (money paid to the Scout Association for insurance, the District for activities and Boidier Hurst management committee for the local campsite) and also a small proportion to Group for equipment (maintenance and replacement).

In 2011, Peter Clayton stepped down as Group Chairmen after many years' service to the Group and David Faulkner also resigned as Chair of the HQ Committee. This marked 49 years of his continuous service with the Group having visited the Scouts on camp in 1962.

At the AGM in 2012, Roxanne Bostock, the County Commissioner awarded Geoff Collins with his 50 year Service Award. She also awarded Peter Danks, a parent and a previous member of the District Service Team, with his 20 year Service award and Judith Sitford with her 10 year Service Award.

Catherine Luff agreed to take on the vacant role of Group Chair of the Executive Committee and Paul Moody stepped into the role of Chair of the HQ Committee.

Judith reported that "we have had a healthy colony for the past year. There is plenty of interest in newcomers and it is lovely to welcome siblings from past members into the Colony. Almost every Beaver, when aged 8 has made their way up to Cubs." She was still running Beavers with support from Geoff Collins and Kathryn Ascough who became an ABSL just after her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. She also had support from two Duke of Edinburgh award helpers.

Cubs had now increased to 26 boys and 4 girls. "The cubs have enjoyed a wide range of activities including; soap sculptures, making their own Olympic torches, a BBQ on Epsom Downs, a Queen's tea party and a Jamaican evening."

The Scouts now numbered 20 and held a cycle camp to Boidier Hurst, again visited the Upton Warren Sailing Centre in Bromsgrove for an action packed activity weekend and held a joint camp with the Cubs at Hope Hill in Meopham. A visit to Chatham Dockyard allowed us to invest two Cubs into the Scouts aboard HMS Gannet.

In 2013 Geoff Collins decided to retired after 62 years in the Group and over 50 years as a leader. The Group held a celebration for him with many Scouters and Guiders from the past attending. Richard Ascough (jnr) assumed the role of Scouter in Charge and started his training as Group Scout Leader.



Figure 6 – Richard Ascough (snr) presents Geoff Collins with a special Group award (2013)

At Geoff's celebration evening Richard Ascough (snr), former member of the Parents and Friends Committee and father of the new Scouter in Charge (also called Richard Ascough), presented Geoff with a special Group commemorative award. The award was steel rope in the shape of a turks head woggle. Since being a leader in the Group, Geoff has produced a turks head woggle from coloured electrical wire for all members of the Group who attend one of our camps, a tradition that is continued today by Richard Ascough (jnr). This is the same colour as the sixes so it is used in place of their plastic woggles.

The take up on camps in 2013 was disappointing with only 9 Scouts, 10 Cubs (5 only came for half the week) and 11 Beavers attending our summer camp at Boidierhurst. Cub numbers also plummeted from 27 at the start of the year to 13 by the Autumn.

In September Gillian Webb-Smith stepped down at short notice from the Cub Pack which caused a leadership problem. The Group currently only had 4 warranted leaders for the 3 sections. Judith Sitford in the Beavers, Richard Ascough, Wayne Smith and Peter Sitford in the Scouts. Richard moved from the Scouts to the Cubs and started running the Pack together with a group of 4 parents: Jo Danks, Fiona Bravery, Richard Price and Guy Simpson (all of whom had been on the Big Adventure camp in 2011).

As a result of the enthusiasm of the new leadership team, numbers rapidly increased and by January 2014 the Pack were back up to 30 and the Group started a waiting list - the first time for many years. The leadership problem also meant we had to find additional help in the Scouts. This was fulfilled by a parent rota and a couple of parents, Paul Johnson and Alan Spencer, helping on a more regular basis.

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In May 2014 the Cubs and Scouts entered the District Football Competition where the Chief Scout, Bear Grylls, put in an appearance arriving by helicopter and landing on the Nescot playing fields.



Figure 7 – Bear Grylls (Chief Scout) at the Football Competition with members from 3<sup>rd</sup> Epsom (2014)

The group camp was held at the end of May as a joint camp between the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts at Bentley Copse, Shere. This camp was the wettest and muddiest since the Cub Camp at Boidier in 1977. The whole site was in a foot of mud, but the children still seemed to enjoy it – even if the leaders were completely shattered by the end.



Figure 8 – The Cubs at Mud Camp (2014)

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When the Beavers stayed for the night we had over 60 campers, including leaders, the largest contingent the Group has ever had camping at the same time and in the same place. We all fondly remember 'Mud Camp' as it became known.

2014 also saw Wayne Smith and Richard Ascough take 7 Scouts to Kanderstag International Campsite in Switzerland as part of a Surrey expedition – they also took 3 Scouts from 1<sup>st</sup> Ruxley as part of their Group. Whilst there the Scouts slept at a height greater than Snowdon, walked higher than Ben Nevis, rafted for 22km down the river Aare, went on a high rope course 30ft above the ground and performed a song at the International Campfire in front of 800 people.



Figure 9 – Surrey Scouts trip to Kanderstag (2014)

Leon Leonard, Elliot O'Byrne, Grace Knight, Richard Ascough, Isobel Howard-Lawrence (1<sup>st</sup> Ruxley), Niall Lawrence, Joe Ines, Wayne Smith, Ella Danks, Lizzie Page (1<sup>st</sup> Ruxley), Ross Sims (1<sup>st</sup> Ruxley), Joe Hallett-Bennett

At the AGM in October 2014 Wayne Smith was presented with the Medal of Merit. Judith and Peter Sitford with awarded with the Chief Scout Commendation for Good Service and Richard Ascough was awarded with his 25 year service award.

In November 2014, to commemorate 100 years since the start of the First World War, the Group paraded at St Martin's Church for Remembrance Sunday. They were well represented across all sections (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

2015 started with further growth in the Group. Every section now had a waiting list and the leaders had to consider plans to change meeting times to cope with the increased numbers.

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All sections were meeting on a Thursday evening:

- Beavers 5.00 till 6.00
- Cubs 6.15 till 7.45
- Scouts 7.15 till 9.00

and with the forecast of Scout numbers reaching 40, it was going to be difficult meeting in the Forge for long periods of time.

As a Scout Group we were committed to ensuring that children leaving one section (e.g. the Cubs) are automatically moved to the next section (e.g. the Scouts). The new times meant that the Scouts only overlapped with the Cubs by only 30 minutes (previously this was an hour) and by using creative programming, which might include the Cubs finishing their meeting in the Forge, we were able to maximise the use of our large HQ, allow the Scouts to grow and support the children transferring between the sections whilst still providing a busy and challenging programme.

In addition to growth in the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, the Group now had 2 Young Leaders supporting every section, and at the start of 2015, 4 Beaver Parents (Lindsey Steedman, Katie Bedford, Louise Prime, Kitty O'Sullivan) stepped forward to take out leader warrants to cover for Judith Sitford who went on Maternity leave. By job sharing these new leaders were able to support the Group for two or three weeks a team without feeling the need to turn up every week. They were also supported each week by Richard Ascough in his role as acting GSL and Fiona Bravery who started her training as ACSL and shared her experiences from running the Cub Pack with the new Beaver team. In addition a new leader, John Savidge, joined to support the Scouts.

On a bitterly cold day, to commemorate 100 years since Lord Kitchener and the French minister of war reviewed thousands of soldiers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> London Division on Epsom Downs on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1915, 3<sup>rd</sup> Epsom Scouts provide the Guard of honour to VIPs attending the ceremony.

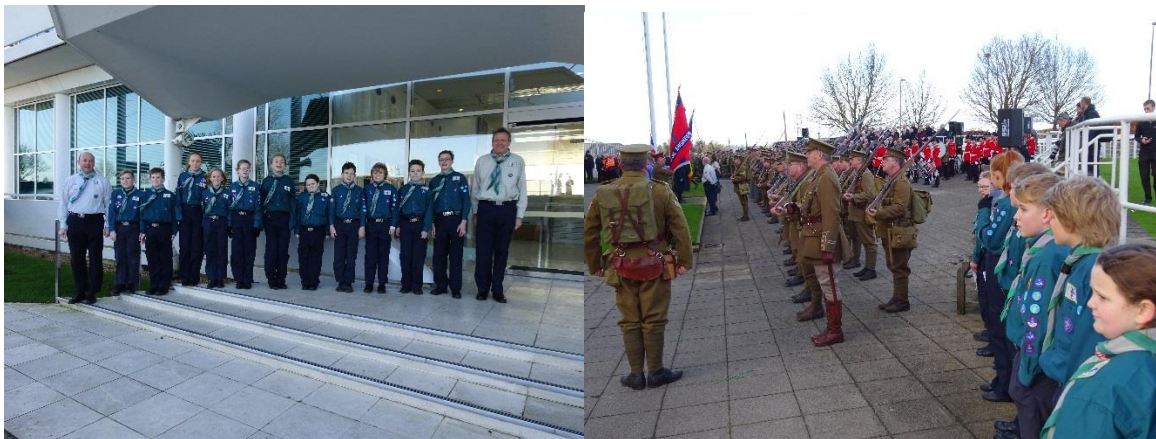


Figure 10 – Guard of Honour for Kitchener's March commemoration (24<sup>th</sup> January 2015)

Richard Ascough, Joe Hallett Bennett, Charlie Prime, Laura Luff, Esme Spencer, Ella Danks, Sasha Jones, Clodagh Gray, Niall Lawrence, Alex Jones, Ciaran Gray, Ben Johnson, John Savidge

In May the Troop held a weekend camp on Brownsea Island, the birthplace of Scouting where they completed in a number of team challenges.

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Figure 11 – Scouts on Brownsea Island (May 2015)

7th May 2015 saw the start of the new Ashley District Explorer Unit, sponsored by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Epsom Scout Group. For a long time Wayne and Richard had been disappointed that as Scouts reached the maximum age they left the Scout Movement. Therefore as the next couple of Scouts reached this position we moved them into the new Unit which met at the same time as the Scouts (using a similar model to when we restarted the Scout Troop in 2003).

At the AGM Richard reported “we have typically been running Joint Scout and Explorer meetings, with the Explorers joining in with the Scouts, undertaking the activity as an Explorer Group or overseeing the Scouts on behalf of the leaders. We have also been holding Explorer Unit meetings with the Explorers and the Scout Patrol leaders to gauge an idea of what they would like to do in the next year and also how they would like the meetings to run. Our first Explorer only (and PL) activity was green bowls in Alexandra Park with the Epsom Park bowling club.” The Group also recruited a new Explorer leader, Vic Young to help run the section.

Numbers in the Group continued to grow in 2016 with 25 Beavers, 33 Cubs, 38 Scouts and 7 Explorers. The Beavers celebrated 30 years since being founded by exchanging 30 postcards with other colonies on the UK. Judith returned from maternity leave and was still supported by Louise, Lindsey and Katie as well as having regular young leaders Amy Harrison (Hedgehog), Rhianna Jones (Woodpecker) and Laurel Spencer (Owl). As part of the activities this year they had an Italian themed sleepover in the HQ, visiting Pizza Express as well as making volcanos and other ‘Italian’ activities.

The Cubs, as per the other sections had to adopt to a new set of Badge criteria. Over the year they covering a wide variety of badges, completing our Personal Safety badge and visiting Epsom Fire station (and trying out the water hoses!) as part of the Fire Safety badge. Each six cooked a different meal one evening as part of our International Badge and many earned a swimming badge when we visited the Rainbow Centre. In the spring term, the Pack was split to cover a choice of badges including DIY, Photographer, Entertainer and Home Safety, with a professional photographer parent and some ex-Scouts who are now carpenters coming in to help. In the summer term they all gained another Hikes Away

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stage, following a trail on Epsom Downs, and went pond dipping with the Horton Park Rangers as part of the Naturalist badge. They also explored Priest Hill, our local Surrey Wildlife Trust reserve, with the Ranger and made dens on Headley Heath to finish the year. James Ascough joined the leadership team as an ACSL and Chloe Morris, Andrew MacKenzie and Grace Knight helped regularly as Young Leaders.

The Scout leaders continued to provide stimulating activities for the Scouts including a get-to-know-you evening for the new 11 Scouts coming up from Cubs or coming in from outside the movement, building vortex cannons, teaching the Scouts how to use Trangias and cooking pancakes on them, building and painting trolleys for a Human Hungry Hippos game, using knots to build drag sledges for races and had a Ready, Steady, Cook competition in which the Scouts had to plan a 3 course meal having bought the ingredients from Sainsburys. They also had an activity making ocarinas (musical wind instruments) from carrots and a water fun evening.

The Scout leadership team expanded to include Wayne Smith, Richard Ascough, Peter Sitford, Luke Giles, Ben Moody (Young Leader and Explorer), Matthew Tanton, Vic Young and John Savidge. Paul Huitson, chair of 2<sup>nd</sup> Stoneleigh also started helping as his son joined the Troop. In addition Alan Spencer continues to help regularly and several parents also helped out this year.

The Ashley Explorer Unit had grown to 7 Explorers with focus on independent planning and self-governance at the heart of their evolution. The leaders initially set the programme for them in the first term by teaching them how to think and plan more for themselves with subsequent evening being organised, with varying degrees of success, by a different member of the Unit. The Unit have formed a close bond, with all Explorers attending very regularly. They are being encouraged to set an example to the Scouts and undertake service activities such as assisting at the May and Summer camps. For example we used their help when they took the Beavers bouldering at camp. On the leader front Vic Young stepped down to support the Scouts and Matt Tanton and Luke Giles managed the Explorers supported by Richard Ascough and Jo Danks as GSL and AGSL respectively.

In May the Group held a successful leadership weekend camp for Cub sixers and seconds, the Scout PLs and APLs and a few of the Explorers. They were all very enthusiastic about the activities and working together. In the summer over 90 of the Group camped at Walton Firs for a Pirate themed camp. In addition, 14 Scouts 'camped' on two narrow boats for a long October weekend. Throughout the year the Group amassed an incredible 527 nights away:- with members achieving anything from their first night away - to well over 50 nights away for one of our Explorers (Ella Danks).

On the HQ front the HQ Committee, lead by Paul Moody as Chair, Pete Danks as Secretary, David Steele as Treasurer and Sharon Hempshall as Booking Secretary, moved the HQ forwards on the development front. A new Table and Chair store was built in the hall, ensuring they are stored safely and are easily accessible, whilst remaining out of sight. The PLs Room was totally transformed, with the stairs reconfigured, a new external door installed, and the room redecorated, with new flooring, cupboards and a round meeting table and chairs. Equipment from the QM can now be taken straight outside without going through the room, and the room can now be used for smaller meetings by both the children and the leaders. Additional shelving and a complete overhaul of the stores occurred through a charity donation and the kitchen was completely refitted. This was complimented

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by two annual working parties, supported by a large number of parents, and allowed the Group to undertake both regular internal and external maintenance activities. These were now becoming a regular fixture on the calendar and allows the leaders to concentrate on the wide and varied programme.

2016 also saw Richard Ascough presented with the Award for Merit signed by Chief Scout Bear Grylls for all the work he has done for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Epsom Group and for Scouting in the District. Richard received a standing ovation from the parents and leaders present.

2017 continued in the same spirit as 2016. The Group grew by a further 9% almost doubling in numbers over the last 5 years. The leaders continued with their training to ensure that they provide a secure, safe and stimulating environment for our Scouts to help them achieve their potential in today's world. Jo Danks completed her Wood Badge as AGSL, Louise Prime completed her Wood Badge as ABSL and Fiona Bravery completed her Wood Badge as ACSL. Section assistants, Guy Simpson, Rick Price and John Savidge also completed all their training and all leaders had up-to-date safety, safe guarding and first aid qualifications and the Executive Committee have also completed all their training on the responsibilities on being a charity trustee.

The Group setup a closed Facebook Group for all sections and this was shown to be exceptionally useful to keep parents (and the older Explorers) informed of any programme changes and also allowed photographs and other information to be shared with parents. The Group also subscribed to Online Scout Manager (OSM) to allow our programme to be shared electronically and enabled parents to sign up children to various events, activities and camps. The online badge feature also proved popular with parents and children able to see their steady progression through the badges and towards the Chief Scout Award for that section.

The Group continued to provide varied and exciting programmes to give them many skills to take with them into their future lives. Two of our Explorers had successes outside of the Group. Seb Jowett was one of only 20 Scouts and Explorers from across the UK, selected to attend a weekend in the Lake District with Scout ambassadors, Steve Backshall and Helen Glover. Whilst there he enjoyed various challenges, slept out in shelters and experienced some traditional Lake District weather. Ella Danks was selected to be a member of the Surrey part of the UK contingent to the World Scout Jamboree in West Virginia in 2019.

After twenty years of running their Nursery in our HQ during the week, Ferndale closed its doors at the start of 2017. Whilst this created a gap in our income it also created an opportunity for new hirers to utilise the available sessions during each weekday morning. In the 2017 we had new bookings from Surbiton Karate, Tennis Tots, Perfect Pilates, Moo Music, and Ready Steady Go Kids. Our other regular users continued to be Ambition Dance, Nam Yang and Epsom Players.

The Group paraded at Boiderhurst for St George's Day as part of a family activity day. Over 100 young people came to Group camp at Hope Hill in Kent, supported by nearly 20 leaders/helpers. The Group also supported District Events, enjoying success at the District swimming gala, winning both the Scout trophy and the Overall trophy.

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Figure 12 – Elaine Mustow (ADC Cubs) presenting the Overall Swimming trophy (2018)

Ethan De Ville, George Prime, Charlie Prime, Adam Crawford  
Matthew Young, Sophie De Ville, George Bustard, Leo Cowley  
Samuel Young, Elena Evers, Miles Crawford

On the Executive Committee Catherine Luff stepped down as Chair to be replaced by Caroline De Ville. Emma Clark took over as secretary. Paul Moody also stepped down as chair of the HQ committee after over 10 years service leaving the HQ in an excellent condition. Peter Danks took over as HQ chair with Vicki Churchill becoming secretary. Clair Poyntz joined Sharon Hempshall as joint Booking secretaries to cope with the additional load created by occasional bookings for parties and other lettings.

Long Service Awards were presented to Vic Young (10 years), Judith Sitford (15 years) and Pete Danks (25 years).

In her parting speech at the AGM, Catherine Luff said “The Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers enjoy what must be the widest range of activities provided by any out of school club — and it’s all done by the most committed and enthusiastic volunteers you will come across. No wonder numbers have increased again this year and the waiting list continues to grow.” A credit to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Epsom leadership team in all sections.

Towards the end of the year Matt Tanton went on a round the world tour and new leaders Elliot Osborne and Chloe Houghton supported Jo Danks in the day to day overseeing of the Explorer programme.

2018 saw the Beaver colony enjoy adventurous activities such as den building, hikes on the Downs and sleepovers in huts and tents. They also enjoyed taking part in the District Party in the Park. They also completed their cycling badge in Alexandra Park, planted bulbs at The Elders for the residents to enjoy in the Spring, had a firework evening with sparklers and decorated biscuit ‘firework pictures’ and celebrated Diwali. They also joined in the now annual Group joint meeting and Den Building activity the end of the summer term on Headley Heath.

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Figure 13 – Group Den Building at Headley (2018)

Cubs outdoor adventures included tracking, wide games, den building and astronomy, as well as earning our Scientist badges, climbing, caving and canoeing. They took part in #YouShape (where the Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers get more involved in choosing what activities they wish to undertake) and visited the mayor at the Town Hall. They also enjoyed District Events like the Night hike, Bowling, Quiz & Emergency Aid courses. 13 Cubs earned their Chief Scout Silver award and we awarded over 200 activity/staged badges, with nights away at Group camp and sixers and seconds camp too.



Figure 14 – Cubs with the Epsom Mayor Cllr Liz Frost (2017)

The Cubs also made Balloon Cars with Hathi and had fun racing them. They cycled to Gibraltar Recreation Ground and did some activities towards the Cyclist badge and in October, 24 Cubs braved the darkness for a surprisingly warm District Night Hike, walking from near Headley to BoidierHurst and then enjoying hot dogs and a campfire.

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With nearly 50 Scouts, the Troop was able to spend time on the water, hiked, competed in an inter-patrol 'Bake Off', camped, participated in a London Monopoly run, visited the Epsom Islamic centre and had a fantastic time at Scoutabout. The Scouts worked towards their Chief Scout's Gold Award as well as other activity badges, enjoyed successes in the District cross country and the District challenge hike as well as raising over £1,500 for the Rainbow Trust, a local charity. Chris Stockwell also joined the leadership team for two terms.



Figure 15 – Scouts bag packing at Sainsburys for the Rainbow Trust (2018)

Will Huitson, Callum Danks, Miles Crawford, Richard Ascough, Jack Price, Matilda Clark, Clodagh Gray, Sasha Jones, Annabel Winter, Christ Stockwell and Harry Tasch

Over the summer 5 leaders took 30 Scouts to Switzerland for the 2018 Surrey Scouts Kandersteg International Expedition (KIX). A great time was had by all (even the leaders) undertaking a multitude of activities including rafting, high and low walks, high ropes and visiting various cities like Interlaken and Bern. In October the leaders took 10 Scouts to Boidier for a survival skills camp. They made bivouacs, which they slept in all weekend, and cooked all meals on open fires including Roast Chicken. They all enjoyed the weekend, despite the rain on the last day.

Group Camp this year was over the May Bank Holiday where the Cubs, Scouts and Explorers went hiking, built shelters, made camp gadgets, cooked on open fires, carried out a Bear Grylls Survival Challenge, did the high ropes course at High Ashurst and built tin-foil ovens. The Beavers also joined for two days and one night.

The Troop also went on a visit to the Mullard Space Centre to find out about rockets, satellites, comets and space thanks to Alan Spencer (who works there). Some Scouts enjoyed it so much that they asked to go back.

The Ashley Explorer Unit continued to grow with an active year involving escaping from panic rooms, camping, hiking, running Cub evenings, mini engineering and a lot of activities involving food! Several Explorers, just up from Scouts, completed their Chief Scout Gold Award and many have started on their Platinum Award.

In the summer the Explorers went to Gilwell 24, a twenty four hour camp where the object is to stay awake as long as possible and complete as many activities as possible. They all had an amazing time and most of them survived without any sleep. Activities included driving,

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silent disco, inflatable football, pillow jumping, midnight cinema and much more. This is definitely on their list to do again next year.



Figure 16 – Explorer Scouts at Gilwell 24 (2019)

Matt Tanton returned from his travels and Elliot Osborne unfortunately left as his job moved to Mexico.

In October, 8 Explorers took part in the first ever County Explorer Frightex24 at Bentley Copse. Despite the extreme cold they were able to enjoy climbing, pedal carts, bushcraft, indoor caving, Jacobs ladder, archery and air rifles plus more! They also established that it is possible for 9 Explorers to sleep in a 4 man tent!

The Group has a great turnout at Remembrance Parade yesterday with 91 children and 19 adults. The youngsters took a leading role in the Service at St. Martin's church. Besides carrying their standards, including the Union Flag, they welcomed the congregation, helped with service sheets, read the first reading, lead the Exhortation, paid their own individual respects by leaving poppies in front of the war memorial, helped with the collection and despite their young age (several were only 6) they were incredibly silent and respectful during the two minutes' silence. A great credit to themselves, the Group and Scouting with lots of positive comments from the congregation.

In 2019 the Group launched "An HQ for the Future" campaign with the aim to improve the facilities at the Forge. Fundraising started with different activities including an Autumn of Promises, further bag packing at Sainsburys, Carol singing and a Wine Tasting evening.

The Beavers reported "The Colony remained full all year – with an extensive waiting list". The leadership team consisted of Judith Sitford (BSL) and Louise Prime (ABSL) assisted by Vijyeta Tripathi, Julie Bundhoo and Ann Juncal as Sectional Assistants.

In the spring, they planted bulbs for Mothers' Day and completed the Navigators Badge. They also worked on the Communicator's badge and the Beavers learnt their address and phone numbers by writing address labels for their cuddly toys - a bit like Paddington Bear! They also learnt to send emails and texts. In May the Beavers joined around 300 other

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beavers from across the county in a mass county camp at Bentley Copse called Beavers Go Wild. They had an amazing time although not a lot of sleep was had!

The Beavers also raised over £100 to send to the Australian Bush Relief Fund, to help towards rebuilding following devastating fires in the country. This did this by decorating biscuits and selling them at Church Parade.

The Cub Football team made it to the semi-finals of the District Football Competition and 12 Cubs enjoyed a taste of kayaking with 1st Cuddington. Two thirds of the 22 Cubs took part in the county event SCRAM in June where the leaders made hundreds of portions of popcorn whilst the Cubs roamed the site undertaking a wide variety of activities from arts and crafts to climbing, challenges and obstacle courses. The Cubs also enjoyed a dark and muddy Night Hike to Boidier Hurst in October and Mang (James Ascough) lead an impromptu Scout sing song when the camp fire had to be cancelled due to the weather.

The Cubs were still lead by Richard Ascough, Fiona Bravery and Guy Simpson supported by James Ascough, Mark Bishop and Rick Price. Ben Johnson and Hayden Fowler continue to support as Young Leaders.

The Scouts reported “we have 40-45 Scouts in the Troop with the majority turning up each week. Like other sections we have a number of potential scouts on the waiting list, but due to the Troop size we are just not able to take them on.”

The Leaders were still Richard Ascough, Wayne Smith, Peter Sitford, Paul Huitson, Andrew Evers and Alan Spencer. Two leaders stepped down during the year, as Vic Young was appointed GSL of 2<sup>nd</sup> Epsom and spent most of his Scouting time with them and John Savidge became unavailable due to work. However Amanda Kindred, daughter of former GSL Geoff Collins, started helping on a regular basis.

Activity wide the Scouts ran a dance session with Ambition Dance, investigated the science of Scouting, did some woodwork, making 8 crazy golf holes (where we had some ex-Scouts, Nathan Hampson and Ben Parker come down to help with the carpentry), cooked Scout pancakes, held a Patrol Challenge, took part in pre-camp training in knife, axe and saw and a camp preparation evening. They also built collection boxes for the HQ Fund, agreed each Scout's Personal Challenges, made soup, played crazy golf on the holes the Scouts made earlier, made News and Weather forecast videos, ran leadership training for the PLs and had a Patrol Forum to plan future activities.



Figure 17 – Building crazy golf courses (2019)

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Outdoor activities included a training hike from Tadworth to Headley, pulled bracken as part of community service, held Wide Games at Nonsuch Park, did some backwoods cooking and had a Go Golfing session at Epsom Golf Club. Some Scouts also made a return trip to the Mullard Space Centre.

Other activities included a 'What 3 Words' trail through Banstead woods, wide games at Nork Park, a visit to St Martin's Church to learn about the Symbology of Remembrance, did navigation exercises on the Downs, went ice skating at Hampton Court, went carol singing at Epsom railway station to raise money for the HQ Fund and went to London for a hike from London Bridge to Waterloo.

The Ashley Unit remained in very good health with 20 active members. The leadership team remained the same, consisting of Jo Danks, Matt Tanton and Chloe Houghton supported by Richard Ascough and the occasional guest appearance of Elliot Osborne when he returned from Mexico. Alex Shepherd also joined team after the Easter walking weekend with the Scouts.

Explorer activities were varied with different Explorers planning some of these session, supported by the leaders: making paper planes, a Christmas photo scavenger hunt, an evening of blindfold activities, mini world record challenges , music quiz, cooking Polish beetroot soup, reenacted a mock trial by jury, designed and painted t-shirts, enjoyed the Epsom chip survey, played games at our Christmas party, created horror movie trailers, built and raced lego balloon cars, and cooked pizzas in an outside wood fired pizza oven as guests of 2nd Ewell Scout Group.

In April 12 Explorers enjoyed a weekend of hillwalking in the Brecon Beacons led by Richard Ascough, Alex Shepherd, Patrick Bravery and John Savidge. They successfully undertook 2 full days of walking with only a little disruption to their routes due to snow on the ground and enjoyed staying in the warmth of a bunkhouse in Llantony. Nine Explorers also went to Gilwell24 in July 2020 and survived the 24 hours of non-stop activities on offer. Richard, Chloe and Matt also survived the experience!



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Figure 18 – Tomahawk throwing (2019)

Group Summer camp this year was at Downe Activity Centre at the end of July. Consisting of 26 Cubs, 25 Scouts, 11 Explorers and 13 Beavers (for one night) they enjoyed zip wires, backwoods cooking, Abseiling, GoKarting, hiking, archery, Jacobs ladder and were able to try tomahawk throwing for the first time.

Summer camp 2019 was actually the end of an era for one piece of our well used equipment. A very many year ago, Geoff Collins constructed a camp water heater from an old copper airing cupboard cylinder. Placed on its side with a fire underneath, it provided an almost unlimited supply of hot water for washing up and other activities. Affectionately known as 'Otter, because it made the water hotter, it could no longer be soldered and repaired. It had a separate filling tank to put cold water in one end and hot came out the other. Ingenious!

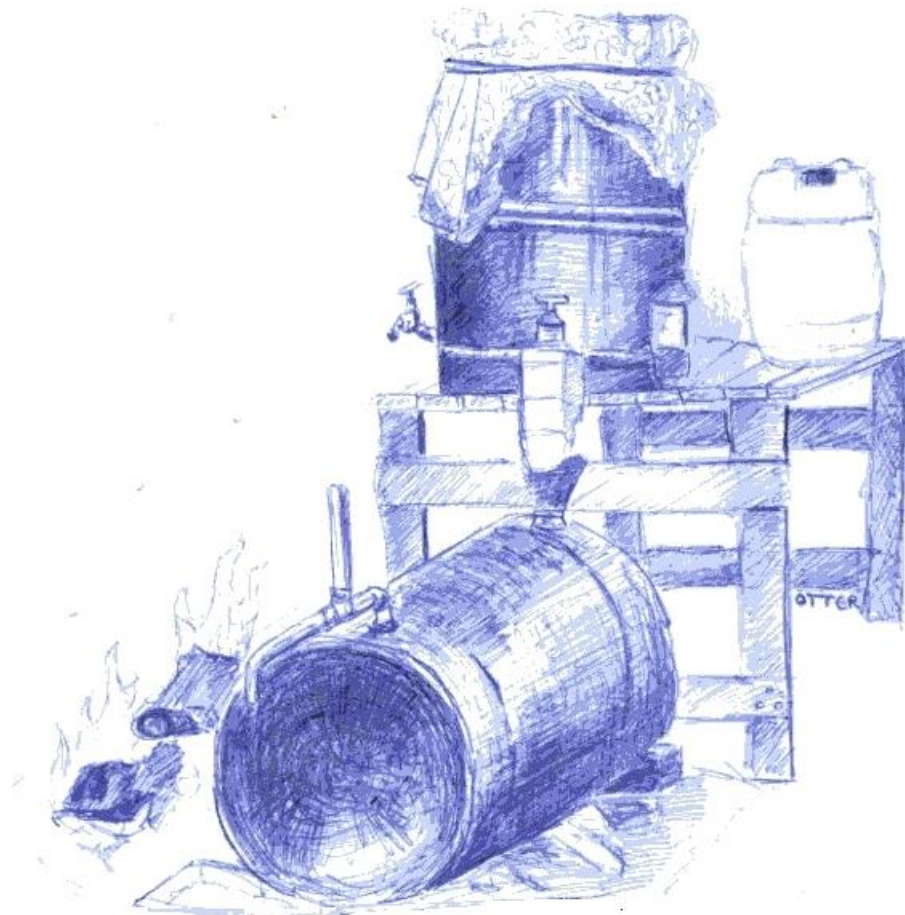


Figure 19 – Otter drawn by Catherine Gray (2012)

Ella Danks represented the Unit as part of the UK contingent at the World Scout Jamboree in West Virginia over 3 weeks in July and August. During this time she had the opportunity to meet Scouts from all over the world and was able to celebrate her 17th birthday by having dinner with a Japanese unit. As part of the 3 week trip her unit visited New York, Washington and Toronto as well as 10 days at the Jamboree itself. Another of our Explorers, Seb Jowett, also attended the Jamboree as a member of the Boy Scouts of America.

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Figure 20 – Seb Jowett and Ella Dank at World Scout Jamboree (2019)

2019 was also the year the Group took over the maintenance and running of the Forge from the District i.e. this building now belongs to the Group. In addition, the Committee secured a new 21 year extension to their lease on the land for the HQ and the Forge from our sponsors, St Martin's Church.

Fund Raising also started to redevelop the Forge into a building for the future.



Figure 21 – Richard Ascough (GSL) outside the Forge (2019)

## The 2020's

Our activities for the new decade were suddenly interrupted by the suspension of face to face Scouting due to Coronavirus (Covid-19). Following the worldwide pandemic of Covid-19 the Scout Association suspended all face-to-face Scouting meetings, activities and events from Tuesday 17th March. It is a testament to the commitment, resilience and adaptability of the leadership team that all sections only missed one meeting on 19th March and by 26th March we had embarked on the new “normal” of online Zoom meetings.



Figure 22 – Online Zoom Activities (2020)

This position continued throughout the Spring and Summer with a wide variety of different activities undertaken. With some people only preferring outdoor activities, having complex family lives, spending all day online with schoolwork, or were just shy and just don't like cameras, the sections tries to vary the programme to suite as many as possible.

On the positive side, within a week the Group started online internet conference calls using a product called Zoom. Over 60% percent of the Group regularly attended Zoom meetings and over 80% of the Group undertook at least one activity in the first three weeks of lockdown.

Activities included: an online Pictionary-like drawing game; making microwave cakes; making a sun-compass; a Scouts Got Talent evening; a Taskmaster session; a What 3 Words treasure hunt, all along with various games and challenges for the week. We also took part in national activities included like Jamboree on the Internet, a campfire online and Hike to the Moon. We renewed our promises on a Group virtual St George's day reflection followed by a Scavenger hunt for the whole family. The Scouts also supported the Thursday Clap for Carers on St George's day in their uniforms. We also held a couple of camps at home to allow the members to gain some Nights Away badges. Some slept in tents at home and other build dens in their houses.

In September restrictions were partially lifted with face to face Scouting allowed to take place outside and in maximum group sizes of 15 children plus 5 adults. The Group put the 'out' in Scouting and took part in hikes, a Cluedo trail around Alexandra Park, Foot Golf and Backwoods cooking at Boidier Hurst, cycling and a Town Trail. Unfortunately activities were curtailed after 7 weeks with a National Lockdown Two and the Group therefore moved back to online Scouting.

Remembrance Parade was cancelled this year due to the pandemic, so the Group paid their respects to the fallen in Epsom Cemetery by using their allowed daily exercise with their family to remember those who gave their lives for us all.

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Figure 23 – Remembrance Parade (2020)

2021 started off in a similar way to the majority of 2020 with another National Lockdown and more online Scouting. However this time schools were shut and the children were doing a large amount of online school learning. Numbers in the Groups declined slightly and whilst online sessions continued, weekly attendance was low with children not wishing to have yet more online sessions. This was despite the sections running activities very different to school work.

The Beavers however did thrive with over half the Colony joining during lockdown. When face to face meetings eventually started again it was hard to remember everyone's names, especially as they didn't have it written on the bottom of the screen under their head (one advance of Zoom).

Scouting however did not decline because of the 2020/21 lockdowns and by Christmas we were almost back to pre-Coronavirus numbers and we had a waiting list of over hundred children all wanting to join. Unfortunately we just did not have the space.

Part of the popularity was the leaders continued to come up with lots of exciting and challenging activities. We also had a large number of adults volunteering to help in the various sections.

As we started 2022 the Beavers were still leader by Judith Sitford and Louise Prime supported by Anna Keith, Crystal Vymeris and Andrea Petrie. The Cubs were led by Richard Ascough, Fiona Bravery, Guy Simpson and James Ascough. Shadi Coates also started helping. The Scout Leaders (Richard Ascough, Wayne Smith, Peter Sitford, Andrew Evers, Amanda Kindred and Paul Huitson) were joined by Richard Downing who had been helping on summer camp for many years and John Savidge also returned for a few terms. We are also supported by two former Scouts who are helping as Young leaders, James Downing and Matthew Young. The Explorers are now run by Jo Danks, Matt Tanton and Ben Johnson.

Whilst the pandemic might have been over by 2022, we were still taking sensible precautions and decided to hold our St. George's Day Parade in the fresh air of Epsom Downs.



Figure 24 – St George's Day Parade (April 2022)

The Beavers attended Bazzaz a county wide activity day and 41 Scouts attended Scoutabout a county wide camping and activity weekend for Surrey Scouts and Guides and the Ardingly County Showground. The leaders ran a popcorn making activity (for the 5<sup>th</sup> time), when the Scouts and Guides had to make the popcorn on gas burners before then eating it. It is amazing how many had never lit a match before!

In June 2022 we were delighted to welcome the County Commissioner, Joe Rogerson, the District Commissioner, Karl Nicholas, and three leaders from BSA (American Scout Troop). One of our Scouts/Explorers, Seb Jowett, gave a presentation as the final part of his Queens Scout Award. Seb had joined the Group at the age of 11 transferring from 2<sup>nd</sup> Ewell. However soon after joining he and his family moved to Geneva, Switzerland. There he joined the only available English-speaking Scout Troop in the area which happened to be an American Scout Troop. When he returned to England he rejoined 3<sup>rd</sup> Epsom as a Scout and then Explorer, joining us for weekly meetings on Thursdays. His Fridays were taken up with attending an American Scout Troop in Cobham. As part of the BSA he achieved the highest award, the Eagle Scout and he invited the County Commissioner, Deputy County Commissioner, GSL and AGSL to his prestigious Eagle Scouts award ceremony. Seb was now achieving the highest award in UK Scouting, the Queens Scout Award, and hence we invited the leaders from the BSA to join us for his presentation. We suspect that very few people in the world have achieved both the Eagle Scout and also the Queens Scout Award.

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Figure 25 – Seb Jowett doing his Queens Scout Award Presentation (June 2022)

Karl Nicholas (District Commissioner), Julia Kielstra (Deputy County Commissioner), Seb Jowett, Ben Johnson, Joe Rogerson (County Commissioner) Richard Ascough (GSL), Richard Denyar (Deputy District Commissioner), Marco Caretta (BSA Leader), Wayne Wilcox (BSA Leader), Matthew Johnson (BSA Leader)

To celebrate our 100th Anniversary in 2022 the Group decided to camp at Boidierhurst for their summer camp. As part of that camp they arranged a reunion and activity day for both current and former members. The Group also commissioned an anniversary badge. A competition was held amongst the sections to design a badge to celebrate 100 years. Common themes emerged of fires and tents, as well as balloons, cakes and candles. Nine badge designs were selected and parent Richard Holt merged and produced our final badge.



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Figure 26 – Finalists for our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Badge design

The badge elements included

- a tent and the moon to represent Scouts going camping,
- the grey and green of the Group Scarf,
- a balloon as a nod to the anniversary celebration, and
- the scout logo and St. Martin's logo



Figure 27 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Epsom Anniversary Badge