

2nd Stoneleigh (St. John's) Scout Group

Annual Report 2023

The Group continues to go from strength to strength with another year of growth in the number of young people we can provide activities for and in our leadership team. In January 2023 we opened an Explorer Unit to be run in partnership with our Group. Numbers in the Unit are small to start, but no doubt this will grow rapidly over the coming years as we saw when we reopened the Troop just three years ago.

All Sections have been busy during the year and have taken part in most District events. They also have attended services at St. John's church to celebrate Remembrance Day, Harvest Festival and Mothering Sunday.

During the year our Beaver Scouts attended their first spring camp at Boidier Hurst since 2019 taking part in various activities including a hike on Headley Heath and sleeping under canvas for the first time. They had a fantastic spell at Bazzaz at Merrist Wood getting involved in lots of adventurous, crafty, sporty, and silly activities. They also took part in the District Emergency Aid day and made a splash at the District Swimming Gala. To round off the year, some of them took part in the virtual County camp 'Reach for the Stars' making their own dens and joining in with plenty of badgework deeds from home. Other pursuits during the year included superheroes, mini-pioneering, photography, international pastimes,



cycle safety, exploring Horton Country Park and learning about the foodbank. We were lucky to have visits from the Blue Cross for the animal friend badge and a visit from the police for the safety badge. We baked shortbread, learnt about money and space, celebrated the Chinese New Year, Shrove Tuesday (with pancakes) and the Hindus' Holi, and completed our own experiments.



The Beaver Scout Colony was deliberately reduced in size this year to ensure that all Beaver Scouts would be able to continue into the Cub Scout Pack when they turned eight years old, given the growth in the Pack. This reduction also allowed the Beaver Colony to have the ability to cater for their needs. Having reduced to around sixteen, towards the end of the year the Colony has begun to grow again with the year ending with about twenty-four. The Colony is supported by a new Section Assistant in Becca Collinson.

The Cub Scout Pack continues to grow with demand high as they tell their friends how much fun they are having! We held a two-night camp at Boidier Hurst with sixteen Cub Scouts for the first time since pre-COVID, and they were so excited to be on camp that the torrential rain did not dampen their spirits. Rather it brought on a mass mess tent sing-and-dance-along to drown out the thunder! The District Cub Scout Challenge and kayaking on the Thames with 1st Cuddington kept them busy for the remainder of the summer term. In September the Cub Scouts visited Epsom Fire Station and relished learning about the equipment and clothing but mostly they enjoyed squirting the hose pipes as high up the tower as they could.



The Cub Scouts chatted with other Scouts around the world via the internet for JOTI and joined in with the District Emergency Aid Day to earn their stage two badges. After a tremendous effort at the District Swimming Gala where they were joint second, the year ended with a trip to PGL at Marchant's Hill for some adventurous activities and a



couple of nights away. Other activities across the year included navigation challenges, chip-shop hikes, learning knots, playing games, home safety badge, environmental activities towards the world challenge and the disability awareness badge. The Pack ended the year with about thirty Cub Scouts and is supported by our new Section Assistants Laura Merrifield and Zahra Sheikh.

The Scout Troop has had an amazing year, starting off with a night-hike and sleepover at Boidier Hurst where they had to amend their route due to sleeping cows on the path and survived overnight temperatures of minus three degrees centigrade. Scoutabout followed, with twenty-two of the Troop spending a fantastic weekend with the rest of the County doing such a wide variety of



Scoutabout



activities. It was a weekend to remember! Hot on the tails of Scoutabout was a session on the Thames run for us by 1st Cuddington where they got to try their hand at kayaking.

Summer Camp was spent at Ferny Crofts where they enjoyed a week of adventurous activities on and off the campsite, including climbing, crate stacking, raft building and a beautiful day hike through the New Forest. The



New Forrest Hike





highlight of the camp was spending the afternoon at Boscombe beach playing in the sand and eating fish and chips and ice creams.

Six of our Scouts joined the Pioneer22 weekend at Bentley Copse making giant structures and racing chariots. The Autumn term saw the Scouts start their fundraising badge, deciding to raise money for Battersea Dogs and Cats Home. With a stall

at 'Lights on Broadway' selling decorations and dog biscuits and running craft events the Troop made a profit of three hundred and fifty pounds. Some of our Scouts assisted Surrey Wildlife Trust with a day of conservation at Nower Wood near Leatherhead.



We finished the year with the District Challenge Hike around Headley Heath and Box Hill, the District Swimming Gala where the Scouts brought home some medals and a very wet and muddy overnight stay at Boidier Hurst. Other activities during the year included cooking, fire lighting, teamwork challenges, navigation, first aid, global issues, learning about black history month, building newspaper towers, and taking part in '2nd Stoneleigh's Got Talent'. The Troop continues to grow, this year from eighteen to twenty-six, supported by the team including our new Assistant Scout Leader Chris Littler and a new Section Assistant in Josie Farrar who decided to continue after finishing her Gold DofE volunteering with the Troop.



Our new Explorer Scout Unit started with just two members, who have both joined the Young Leaders programme and are helping with the Beaver and Cub Scout sections. The Explorer Scouts joined the Scouts for games, and for wide games at Boidier Hurst during our spring sleepover. They also managed a short hike, cooking, fire lighting, whittling, had a movie night and worked on their Digital Citizen badge. Both finished their Chief Scout's Gold Awards shortly after joining the

Unit – a fantastic achievement. We look forward to expanding the Unit in the coming year and being able to do more with them.

During the year our Beaver Scout Section gained two hundred and thirty-eight badges including seven Chief Scout's Bronze Awards. Our Cub Scout Section gained three hundred and sixty badges including seven Chief Scout's Silver Awards and our Scout Section gained eighty-five badges. Overall, we provided two hundred and two Nights Away for our young people.

I would like to thank our leadership team, Board of Trustees, supportive parents, and our amazing young people for their continuing involvement in Scouting at 2nd Stoneleigh.

Steph Howard
Group Scout Leader

