

15th (Otford) Sevenoaks Scout Group

Annual Report 2017 – 18



The Group Chairman Report

The last twelve months here at Otford Scout Group have been very busy and productive. Beavers, Cubs and Scouts are all thriving with attendance numbers in all sections at, or nearing, capacity levels. This is achieved in no small part due to the marvelous efforts and commitment of the leadership teams and parent helpers who give up their spare time each week, voluntarily, to make this Scout Group a fantastic place for the young people of Otford in which to learn and develop new skills, make great friends and feel part of the Otford community. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for all their hard work and dedication.

Unfortunately, during this last year Lesley Rutter, our Group Scout Leader (GSL), has moved away from the area to live close to her family further north in the country. Not only does she leave the post of GSL vacant but Lesley's wealth of experience and knowledge within the Scout Movement, let alone her personality, will be sorely missed by everyone at the Group. Of course, we wish her all the best in all her future endeavours and gave her a good send off in December with thanks for all her hard work and commitment.

All sections of the Group have taken on many enjoyable challenges and activities over the course of the last year so please read the attached Section Reports for Beavers, Cubs and Scouts which give you a real insight into how much work, fun, excitement, knowledge, new experiences and friendship building is achieved by being part of the Scout Movement.

Highlights this year included MAG 7 which was attended by approx. 600 young scouters from the whole of the Sevenoaks District. This event generally takes place every four years; this year the weather was fantastic and everyone involved thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Saint Georges Day parade through Sevenoaks was, once again, very well attended by Otford and camps in both the summer and winter were well attended by many sections of the Group.

I would like to send a special thanks to all the parents and helpers who give up their spare time to support the group helping at evening meetings, camps, fundraising events and hut tidy-up days. Without their support the many things done by the group would simply not take place and I would like to encourage all parents to try their best to get involved as it is such a rewarding and fun experience for both you and your children.

Fundraising this year has been successful for the group with good returns from both the Bonfire Night and Annual Village Fete. As always, being a charity, our expenditures deplete these funds continuously. Any offer of expertise from any parent or carer, be it practical or professional, is always very much appreciated to help drive down the costs the group incurs in respect of third party fees. Please let one of the leadership team know if you believe you can assist in any way.

I am looking forward to another exciting year for the group which I am sure will no doubt surpass the excellent achievements of this year and I wish you all the very best.

Sean Forrest

Beaver Scout Report

Another fabulous year for the Otford Beaver Colony with plenty of scouting activities for our young people to enjoy. Some of the highlights of this year by numbers include:

- 12 new Beavers invested
- 113 Activity badges earned
- 67 Challenge badges awarded
- A combined 52 Nights away - all under canvas
- 8 Chief Scout Bronze Awards gained
- 5 new adults volunteering to be regular adult helpers

The Colony is currently full with 24 members, and has been throughout the year, with a waiting list that includes 34 children old enough to join us but with no space to accommodate them. A second colony would definitely be viable. In the last year 15 beavers have left and are now currently invested in both Seone and Waingunga Cub packs or have begun 'Moving On'.

It was a real pleasure to help organise a District Chief Scout Bronze Award ceremony in February at the Sevenoaks Town Council offices and I was extremely proud to see 8 Bronzes awarded to Otford Beavers by the Mayor of Sevenoaks.

At the end of the summer term last year we held a one-night sleepover in tents at the hut. This was a great chance for our more nervous campers to stay over in familiar surroundings. Although not much actual sleep was involved it did give me the opportunity to gain my Campsite Nights Away Permit.

The summer holidays 2017 concluded with 10 Beavers joining the Otford Cubs at their Summer Camp in Downe for two nights under canvas. This was the first time that our Beavers had spent more than one night away as Scouts and I was extremely proud of how they settled into camp life. The Beavers took part in two adventurous activities, crate stacking and grass sledging. Crate stacking was a real highlight and it was fantastic to see real teamwork in action and the support that they all gave to each other. Even myself and Kingfisher managed to reach dizzy heights! Our young people do really enjoy spending time outdoors and gaining their independence during camp, although no Beaver is quite as good at searching the tent for an elusive sock as Skylark. Thanks, as always, to Jonathan and his team for letting us piggy-back on his camp.

As part of the Million Hands initiative Beavers did extremely well during the Walk for Water with all participants completing the 3.5 mile walk along the Darent Valley and some made it to 6 miles with most wanting to walk further. It was a great group experience and in excess of £2,000 was raised for Water Aid and Toilet Twinning.

Mag 7 was a definite highlight of the scouting year for Beavers. Several young people were staying away for the first time and after a day jam-packed with activities, the sun beating down and a late night around the campfire we did have a few tears at bedtime, but they all stuck it out and I was a very proud leader because of both their resilience and comradeship. Even though

there was a lot of organisation and admin before the event we were very well supported by parents and the Beavers enjoyed the group experience of camping with Cubs and Scouts and they all left wanting to stay longer.

We have held several 'log chews' this year and the Beavers have suggested many of the badges that we have completed and the activities that we have taken part in (although I am not sure we will do the 10-night camp or go snowboarding). We have covered first aid, Halloween, bug hunting, disability awareness, fair trade, space activity, science experiments and the World Cup amongst other things.

I would like to thank Nicola for her support over the last year as my Section Assistant, even though her son will be moving on to Cubs I hope that she will continue to help out when she can. I am also very pleased that four parents, Elkie, Richard, Nic and Amy, have stepped forward and offered to support the Colony as regular parent volunteers and I hope you all enjoy your scouting journey.

Jan Padgett (aka Skylark)

Waingunga Cub Pack Report

The Waingunga Cub pack has grown over the last 12 months with those beavers old enough moving up and joining us on a regular basis. We started the year with 16 cubs; one left during the year and three joined. We now have three new joiners who are due to start taster sessions this term. Now that we have over 18 cubs, we have started a new Six – The Wolf Pack – and promoted older cubs to Sixer and Seconder roles in the new Six. We also promoted another of our older cubs to Seconder in Panther; well done to all of those cubs.

We are fortunate to have had a regular helper, James, each week for the last few months. James is doing his Duke of Edinburgh and is a real asset to the cub pack. He helps out without asking what needs to be done, helps the cubs with their tasks and he gets on really well with the cubs, so we are grateful to have James with us.

Since the end of last year, the Waingunga pack has been run by Hathi (Jo) and myself, Raksha, along with regular parent helpers. Now that I am shortly due to leave, we are delighted to welcome our new leader, Bagheera (Richard) to Waingunga. We invested Richard during our midsummer hike last week and are really pleased to welcome Bagheera to the pack.

We have been making the most of light evenings and warm weather by going on hikes each term, and arranging various outdoor activities and games including cooking bannock breads in billycans over the fire. Many of the Waingunga cubs were involved in the Remembrance Sunday and St George's day parades, and some joined the sponsored walk to raise money for Water Aid.

We have enjoyed 2 cub camps this year, with Akela's Winter Camp in February and then the district Mag 7 camp in May. The Mag 7 camp was a fantastic weekend with plenty of sunshine, and opportunities to meet cubs from other packs in the Sevenoaks area. The days were filled with activities such as rifle shooting, archery, abseiling and playing African drums; the cubs that did attend had a fantastic time.

Over the year we have worked towards various badges including the Environmental Conservation badge, Backwoods Cooking, Scientist, Local Knowledge, Navigator and Air Activities among others. We are planning to go to Chipstead Sailing club this term for a talk and introduction to sailing, and we will be holding our own sports day with merit towards the Athletics badges. Earlier this year, 5 of our cubs were awarded their Chief Scout Silver awards by the mayor, which was a great achievement. We hope that more of our cubs will reach this level over the course of the coming year.

Seeonee Cub Pack Report

Seeonee Pack started the period covered by this report with six Cubs being awarded the Chief Scouts Silver Award, the highest a Cub can receive. The Cubs attended a ceremony on 30th June where their achievement was recognised and they were able to hobnob with the Mayor!

The major events or activities worthy of note

On 1st July Cubs from both Packs (17 from Seeonee, 9 from Waingunga) stayed overnight on HMS Cavalier a WW2 destroyer laid up at Chatham Historic Dockyard. They started off with a fish & chip supper, had a private tour of the ship, watched 'The Cruel Sea' before then settling down on two mess decks for a night of fitful sleep. The following day they toured the museum before home in the afternoon. One of the parent helpers, an ex-Matelot who stayed over, suffered a flashback whilst shaving in the 'heads'. (If you belong to our facebook group you'll find a picture of the incident.)

Between 30th August and 3rd September Seeonee held a joint summer camp with Waingunga and the Beaver Colony. We were also joined by 4 Scouts who had allegedly come to help! The Cubs took part in three on-site activities: air rifle shooting, abseiling, and an aerial tree trek. They also tackled some traditional Scouting skills, including fire lighting, axe work, whittling, bivvy building, and backwards cooking. They cooked their own lunches each day using a variety of methods. One meal, Bully Beef stew, a soldier's staple, went down particularly well. At the end of the camp the Cubs had attained their backwards cooking activity badge, the outdoor challenge award, and the adventure challenge award. The older Cubs were able to refresh/improve previously held skills.

30th October the Pack attended Lower Grange Farm for a climbing evening in their purpose built 'barn'. Despite proving yet again that I have no sense of direction, the Cubs had plenty of time to make use of these excellent facilities, with a couple of Cubs conquering their fear of heights and completing one half of their personal challenge badge

Between 2nd and 4th February 21 Cubs from both Packs attended Wilberforce Scout Centre for our 'winter' camp. We had the traditional Baloo's Friday night film show, camp fire, wide games and sleeping bag races. And although discontinued, the Cubs attempted the adventure activity badge, completing all the requirements which include fire lighting (and making a hot drink on it), tracking, hike preparation including route planning and then the hike. All the Cubs attained the badge, plus nights away badges ranging from 2 to 20.

At the end of February, we also had a swimming evening at Larkfield Leisure Centre followed by a chip supper.

On 25th March Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Leaders and parents took part in a sponsored walk from Otford, along the River Darent to where it enters The Thames. The effort was to raise money for WaterAid and Toilet Twinning. As a result of the fantastic support given, either by those taking part or by those sponsoring them, the Group raised £2000 for these two charities (split £1500

WaterAid & £500 Toilet Twinning). The hut toilets are now twinned with latrines in Africa and South America - check out them out next time you 'go'!

For the first time in a while the Group attended the District camp: MAG7 - 4th to 7th May, held at St Clere's Estate. All agreed it was a successful, but exhausting weekend with non-stop activities for the Scouts and non-stop food prep or supervision of activities for the leaders. The three sections thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Weekly meeting, badges etc summary

Of the weekly meetings, Cubs have taken part in the following activities: fire lighting skills, nerf gun evening, conkers, damper bread baking, night hikes, games evenings, road safety badge, party popper canons, artist badge, pancake night problem solving, sausage sizzle, trek cart challenge, athletics evening.

A break-down of badges earned as a section: various Hikes and Nights away staged badges, adventure, skills and outdoor challenge badges. Navigators stage 1, 2 and 3 badges, artist, adventure, road safety and athletics [plus] activity badges.

Several Cubs have made an individual effort and have been awarded the following badges for work done outside of meetings; home help, cyclist, and book readers activity badges, staged swimming badge and personal challenge badge

A handful of cubs have turned out to all, or nearly all meetings, days out, camps etc this last year and each have attained a good number of staged, activity, and challenge badges, which reflects their commitment to Scouting. In this day and age, no mean feat!

The Pack ends the year with 18 Cubs, the number we started out with. We experienced a dip at the start of 2017, but numbers are beginning to rise with an influx of both Beavers and those on the Beaver waiting list - who are now too old for that section - heading our way. This coming year could well be busy!

Thanks

Thanks goes to Mark Whittock, the ACSL for Seeonee, for his support at meetings, camps etc and his friendship without. And to those parents who regularly commit to help, sometimes with next to no notice. And to Lucy, the power behind the thrown!

Scout Leader Report

We have had an average attendance of 20 each Friday and have been working on Pioneering with knots and lashings. This has been a bit hampered with using broom handles for poles due to the woodworm in the old larger poles. This is being looked at this year for replacements.

Map reading and model making of landscapes using cardboard to give a 3D contour image helped to visualize route planning and camp building. Problem solving, quiz nights, cooking, sawdust stoves and scavenger hunts have all been good evenings. Thanks to Jonathan we had a minibus full of scouts to go to Larkfield swimming.

There was a good turnout for the Remembrance Day Service, St Georges Day Parade and a Colour Party for the Civic Service. 11 Scouts went on the sponsored walk along the River Darent to Dartford raising a good sum for Water Aid and Toilet Twinning.

The Mag 7 District Camp was attended by 21 Scouts at Kemsing with lots of activities and fantastic weather. Thanks to all the parents who volunteered to help making it run smoothly for the entire Group.

We have had the help of ex scouts Tom Woolard and Adam Marshall volunteering for their DofE. Thanks to them and the other leaders, Richard, Garry and Russell.

Russel Hearsom who has been a leader with Cubs and Scouts for many years now has 'retired' having a baby son in the early part of this year. He will be greatly missed and we are looking for volunteers to take his place permanently or on a part time basis. So, if you feel you could help for a couple of hours on a Friday night please let us know; it is good fun helping the Scouts learn new skills.

Annual General Meeting of 15th (Otford) Sevenoaks Scout Group

29th June 2018

AGENDA

- Welcome from the Group Chairman
- Apologies for absence
- To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 23rd June 2017
- To receive the Annual Report and Accounts for year ending 31st March 2018
- To receive the Group's nomination for Group Chairman
- To elect the Group Treasurer and Group Secretary
- To receive the Group's nominations for Membership of the Group Executive Committee
- To propose and elect Members to the Group's Executive Committee
- Any Other Business at the discretion of the Group Chairman

Minutes of the AGM of the 15th Sevenoaks (Otford) Scout Group held at 8pm on Friday 23rd June 2017 at the Scout Hut, Otford, Kent.

Present:

Sean Forrest; Chairman (SF), Sarah Yates; Secretary (SY), Lesley Rutter; Group Scout Leader (LR), Sam Norris; Scout Leader (SN), Jonathan Booth; Cub Leader (JB), Jan Padgett; Beaver Leader (JP), Rachel MacGadie; Beaver Assistant Leader (RM), Liz Simmons; Parent Representative/Exec Committee Development Team (LS), Mike Schwarz; Exec Committee member (MS), Caroline O’Mahony (COM) DC Team, John Talbot (JT) ADC Scouts. Approx. Fifty parents.

The meeting commenced at 8pm following the Group ‘Thank you’ party with SF welcoming everybody, especially JT and COM from the new DC Team, thanking all for attending.

1.	Apologies for Absence: Wesley Kerslake and Garry Norris.	
2.	Approve minutes of the AGM held on 22 nd May 2016. Acceptance proposed by JP, seconded by JT and unanimously approved.	
3.	Receive the Annual Report to 31 st March 2017. Following earlier provision of the report to all present by email or hard copy, acceptance proposed by SY, seconded by JB and unanimously approved.	
4.	Receive the Annual Accounts for the 12 months to 31 st March 2017. Following an advisory statement by SF to the meeting regarding a possible administrative error in the account reporting, whereby the income figures for the Summer Fête fund-raiser for 2016 and 2017 may have been transposed in the summary of the accounts, acceptance of the accounts was proposed on the provision that clarification be sort from WK. Proposed by JB, seconded by Karen Lynch (Parent) and unanimously approved.	
5.	Receive the Group Scout Leader’s nomination for Group Chairman. LR nominated Sean Forest (SF) to continue as Chairman. Unanimously agreed.	
6.	Elect the Group Treasurer and Group Secretary. Prior to the AGM, WK had indicated to the GSL that he was prepared to continue as Treasurer for another year; proposed by LR and unanimously accepted. SY was prepared to continue as Secretary; proposed by LR and unanimously accepted.	
7.	Receive the Group Scout Leader’s nominations for membership of the Group’s Executive Committee. All Section Leaders have agreed to be on the Committee. Liz Simmons (LS) has agreed to continue as a member of the Executive Committee and Ian Davis (ID) and Mark Jackson/Karen Lynch (MJ/KL)	

	<p>were all nominated to become members of the Executive Committee, proposed by LR, seconded by SY and unanimously accepted.</p> <p>Due to his many commitments within the District and Halstead Scout Group, Mike Schwarz (MS) was not asked to continue as a member of the Executive Committee for Otford Scout Group. A brief speech of thanks and presentation to acknowledge all his hard work over the years for the Group followed later in the meeting.</p>	
8.	<p>Section Leaders' annual reports made available to all via email and hard copy at the AGM. Attached to the Annual Report.</p>	
9.	<p>District Representative welcome. Caroline O'Mahony, a member of the new District Commissioner Team, introduced herself and JT to the meeting and spoke briefly about the District, Otford Group, it's achievements and development through the year. She then presented LR with a Scouting Thank You badge on behalf of the Sevenoaks District Executive Committee for work she had done for Scouting in Sevenoaks during her time as DC.</p> <p>COM then made a brief speech and presentation along with SF to Mike Schwarz regarding his time within the Otford Scout Group, thanking him for all his input and efforts over the years, awarding him with a Scout Thank You badge and small gift from the group.</p>	
10.	<p>AOB at the discretion of the Chairman. SF handed over to COM, LR and the Section Leaders for the presentation of annual group awards. Awards were made as follows:</p> <p>Eight Beavers were presented with their Bronze Chief Scout Award Certificates and badges.</p> <p>Six Cubs were presented with their Silver Chief Scout Award Certificates (Badges to be formally presented at the Bradbourne Council Offices on 30th June)</p> <p>Beaver Scout of the Year award - chosen by leader JP, presented to Donnie MacGadie.</p> <p>Waingunga Cub of the Year award, as chosen by their peers: Finlay Hampton</p> <p>Seeonee Cub of the Year award, as chosen by their peers: George Booth</p> <p>Scout of the Year award, chosen by leader SN: Tim Wilson</p> <p>An award was also made to Jonathan Booth (Seeonee Pack leader) by the GSL, Lesley Rutter, for all his input over the many years in the group.</p> <p>SF thanked all and closed the meeting at 8.25pm</p>	