

Spring 2012 Newsletter

A Message from the Group Scout Leader

Welcome to our first Gossoms End Scout Group newsletter for 2012. Although we are only a few months into 2012, our programme of activities for the year is well underway. We have set up a partnership with the Sunnyside Rural Trust to support the wider community and we are organising a fund raising litter pick event as part of the national Scout Community Week. And, crucially from a Group strategic perspective, we are now counting down to the launch of our second scout troop.

This newsletter explains a bit more about all of these activities. But before that, I would like to thank all of the leaders, committee members and parent helpers for their exceptional commitment, effort and enthusiasm which has got the year off to a flying start and set us up for a fantastic 2012.

Finally, a special thanks to the new leaders who have joined us recently: Sam Gillanders, Becky St.John, Adrian Truman-Williams and Ian Sayle who have poured their time and enthusiasm into helping Jonathan keep our fantastic Friday Cub pack buzzing.

Gossoms End strategic review

Over the last 18 months we've been working on a strategic plan to assess the Group's needs for the next decade. The planning identified that:

- ❖ we, like the rest of the town, have growing numbers and an increasing demand for places in all sections (Feb 2012 census shows we currently have 106 youth and 23 adult members),
- ❖ we need to grow the group sustainably, without putting pressure on our existing leaders and so that we can continue to offer a full and varied programme of adventurous activities,
- ❖ Scout numbers have grown to such an extent that we now need to open our second troop, and
- ❖ we need a quartermaster to look after Group equipment.

We felt that the Group would benefit from enhancing our links with our local community through supporting a local charity. This is central to the Scouting ethos - helping children appreciate others' circumstances and facilitate badge work.



Making the strategic review a reality

The **Jubilee Scout troop** is due to open in April this year to cope with the need for places from our Cubs and to take the pressure off our existing Scout troop and its leaders (but currently full, entry only for Cubs in Group). This is a very exciting development for the Group and we are hugely indebted to Adrian Truman-Williams and Darren Lavin for stepping forward to be Scout leaders and to Paul Suchodolski for becoming a parent helper in the troop. Thank you!

We are very excited to announce that we have established a partnership with **Sunnyside Rural Trust**. Many of you may know Sunnyside as a local charity which helps create work experience opportunities for adults with learning disabilities in and around Berkhamsted. We feel the partnership is truly mutually beneficial: Sunnyside will benefit from our assistance with projects such as veg planting, tending, fruit picking, egg collecting, shed painting, jam making, including fundraising through selling home-grown produce at local markets. In turn, this will provide great opportunities for our Beavers, Cubs and Scouts to be involved in work of genuine value to the community, as well as use of Sunnyside's facilities and outdoor spaces for meetings and events – including whole Group events.



www.sunnysideruraltrust.org.uk

Darren Lavin has very kindly offered to assist Andy Robinson as **quartermaster**. He will help oversee use and care of Group kit and equipment. Thank you Darren!!

Jo McAulay



Events for your Diary...

St George's Day Service and Parade

Sunday 22 April

St George's Day Service and Parade,
Sunday 22nd April

This year it is our Groups' turn to organise the St George's Day parade and service. We will be parading along the High Street and the service is being held in St Peter's Church at 3pm. More details will be given nearer the time.

Scout Community Week

14-20 May

We are taking part in this re-launch of the old Scout 'bob a job' week by holding a sponsored litter collection in the town, along the Bulbourne River and canal towpath around Waitrose, on the afternoon of Saturday 19th May.

Scout Community Week is a great opportunity for us to raise awareness of the contribution that local Scouting makes to the town and to raise funds for our Scout group. We will also be raising funds for Sunnyside Rural Trust and a national Scouting fund that benefits scouts and their families in need of financial support.

<http://scouts.org.uk/news/472/scouts-do-1-thing-on-founders-day>



Jubilee Family Camp

Friday 25 – Sunday 27 May

So far we have about 130 people booked in for the family camp on the 25-27th May. This is a phenomenal response and we are confident it is going to be a great weekend. There is still space, and bookings are still welcome.

The final deadline for bookings is 30 March. No bookings can be taken after this point as we have to finalise activities for the day.



Mass Strawberry Planting

Saturday 24 March, 2pm

Calling all Green-fingered Cubs, Scouts and Beavers...!!

Spring is springing and we are celebrating a new community partnership with Sunnyside Rural Trust with a mass strawberry planting. Sunnyside's members will generously nurture the plants, and we will pick the fruits of their and our labours in a few months. The berries (assuming the fruit pickers can resist scoffing the lot) will be made into sumptuous strawberry jam to sell to family and friends and at Berko's market to raise money for Sunnyside's worthy work. With 400 (yes 400!) strawberry seedlings to plant, it's a case of many hands make light work. We're hoping that a few members of each section will come along to lend a hand, with mum or dad if possible, at 2pm on Saturday 24 March at Sunnyside Rural Trust's Northchurch site (at the far end of Northchurch allotments on New Road). Refreshments will be provided! Please can you bring along any hand trowels and forks, gloves, strong scissors and watering cans, if you have them.

Please phone Jo Macaulay on 01442 864 588 (email gsl@1stgossomsendscouts.org.uk) or Fiona Hinton (our new Sunnyside and community liaison) on 07796 235597 with any questions or to volunteer.

Beavers News

In July we had our **BBQ at Phasels** and District BBQ at Wendover which was very well attended and a great success! The Parents had a great time building shelters with the Beavers, and joined in the final round of the annual Tug o'War.

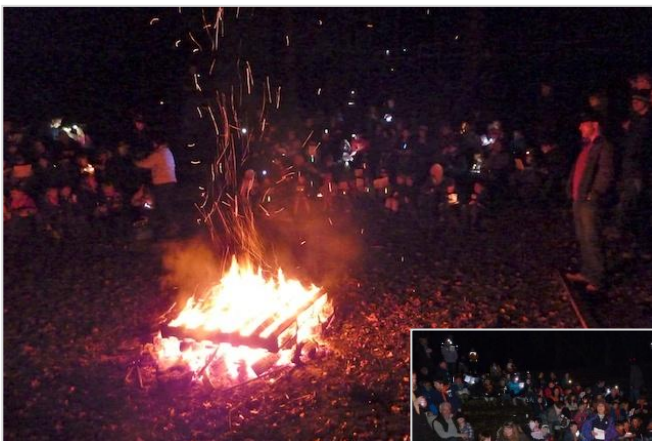
Since then we've had **Diwali celebrations** with the Beavers learning to say hello in Punjabi and Hindi, with a tasting of a variety of Indian foods.

We've been on a **Potato Trail** through Berkhamsted town, with the Beavers searching for potatoes hidden through the High Street, finishing up with chips from McCoy's.



Soup making was quite challenging for some slicing up of the tough vegetables such as swede and trying new food was not an easy task. They were very brave.

The **Christmas Hike at Phasels** was the best we've had so far - running through the woods in the dark looking for Rudolph, making Christmas decorations, songs round a huge campfire in the Auditorium, followed by Father Christmas bringing presents and presenting



them to the Beavers, siblings and Leaders in Santa's Grotto in the woods.

Recently our Parent Helpers made pancakes which went down a treat - the Beavers ate them all - none left for Shirley & me! **Welly throwing** for our Dunlop Day was more challenging for us Leaders than the Beavers - we need to brush up our welly skills!

Future plans include a visit to Waitrose, Pets-at-Home and the Fire Station.

Finally, thanks to all the parents for their support, thanks to Laura and Amy, our D of E young ladies, for their help and to Shirley for her continued support.

Judy Grundy



Friday Cub Pack News

It was with great sadness that the Friday cub pack wished Akela Howard goodbye in September. However, he has not gone far, and we are sure he's having a great time with the Explorers. Luckily, several parents stepped up to help out – Sam Gillanders, Adrian Truman-Williams, Becky St. John and Ian Sayle (part-time) have joined Jonathan Hawkins to make an enthusiastic team leadership.

We have had a very busy few months. We started with an excellent turn-out for the county night hike in September. Four teams of intrepid cubs **hiked in the dark around the wilds of Leverstock Green**, the walking punctuated with challenges such as an assault course, a relay race which involved pulling a cub in a wheelie bin around a field, interpreting grid references and accident response. Sausages and beans were provided beforehand, and burgers and chocolate on the way round kept us all going! In total about 750 cubs and 350 helpers took part, and all slept over at Hobbs Hill school – an amazing event we hope to participate in again next year.

The Friday pack also had a very good turn-out for the **Remembrance Sunday parade**, and our cubs were smart and well-behaved - a credit to the Group.

As the winter nights drew in, we made the best use of the dark evenings by completing the Astronomy badge, led by Ian Sayle. We learned all about the stars and planets, and made mini solar systems in shoeboxes (and covered the tables, floor and ourselves in glitter in the process!). Alex Jenkins' and Toby Spriggs' dads were kind enough to bring in their high resolution telescopes, and all the cubs had the wonderful opportunity to see Jupiter up close, complete with three of its moons.

Hallowe'en brought spooky costumes, apple bobbing and wrapping each other in toilet paper to make

mummys. Sam 'party queen' Gillanders organised a superb celebration, which culminated in some energetic piñata bashing and much sweet-eating. The Christmas do was equally fun, and many thanks are due to the parents who contributed delicious and imaginative food to both events.



This term we have begun with a great achievement - **the Global Challenge badge**. We discovered all about an international disaster relief charity called Shelterbox, and enjoyed a visit from a local Scout,

Kirsty Robertson, who told us all about her recent trip to the International Jamboree in Sweden. Finally we needed to learn about the culture of another country, so we celebrated Chinese New Year in the hut, making

dragon masks and eating Chinese food. Then 40 cubs, parents and siblings attended the 'Chinese New Year Roadshow' at Watford Palace Theatre, where we saw Lion Dancing, some incredible martial arts displays, and traditional Chinese dancing. Two cubs even got a chance to go up on stage and take part in a fan dance!



Looking ahead...

The **Friday pack Olympic-themed cub camp** is planned for the weekend of June 23rd/24th, and we're also hoping to see as many of our cubs and their families as possible at the Jubilee Family Camp in May. Meanwhile this term we will be off to college lakes for some **pond dipping**, and working on our **IT** and **cyclist badges**. It's all good fun!

Becky St. John

Monday Cub Pack News

There was a successful Cub Camp in May last year attended by 18 Cubs when we had a go at archery, rifle shooting and the rolling rock climbing wall. The weather was good enough for a water fight on Saturday afternoon before they learnt how to build and light fires. Sunday morning was bright and clear and the Cubs enjoyed themselves cooking their own breakfasts on open fires.

Summer term meetings covered the Outdoor Challenge badge and a go at the Athletes badge. We also enjoyed a couple of visits to Ashridge for games and shelter building.

At the beginning of the next term, a team entered the County Cub Night Hike. This was based in Hemel and involved the Cubs doing a **12 mile hike in the darkness** and facing up to several different challenges on the way round – as well as receiving multiple snacks along the way. All of the participating Cubs gained their Map Reader and Hikes Away (1) badges, as well as enjoying their time.

We had a good turnout for the **Remembrance Day Service** in November where everyone looked very smart.

As part of the **Global Challenge badge** (which all of the Cubs completed) we had a speaker in from Oxfam talking about the work that they do for children (and others) throughout the world, and how life can be very different in other countries. Then during a chaotic evening the Cubs managed to cook lots of biscuits and doughnuts. We also enjoyed a musical evening looking at the instruments that some people play, how sounds can be made and experimenting with hand bells.

The Spring term meant that it was time to look at the **Promise challenge badge** and how other people have done their best. It was also a good badge to be

doing with 12 new Cubs joining us in January and getting invested. One night with the snow on the ground we were able to go out and see how they would get on with building a now shelter or igloo. Whilst none of the groups got a top on the igloo, good fun was had all round and we realised just how much snow is needed to build a shelter. After half term it

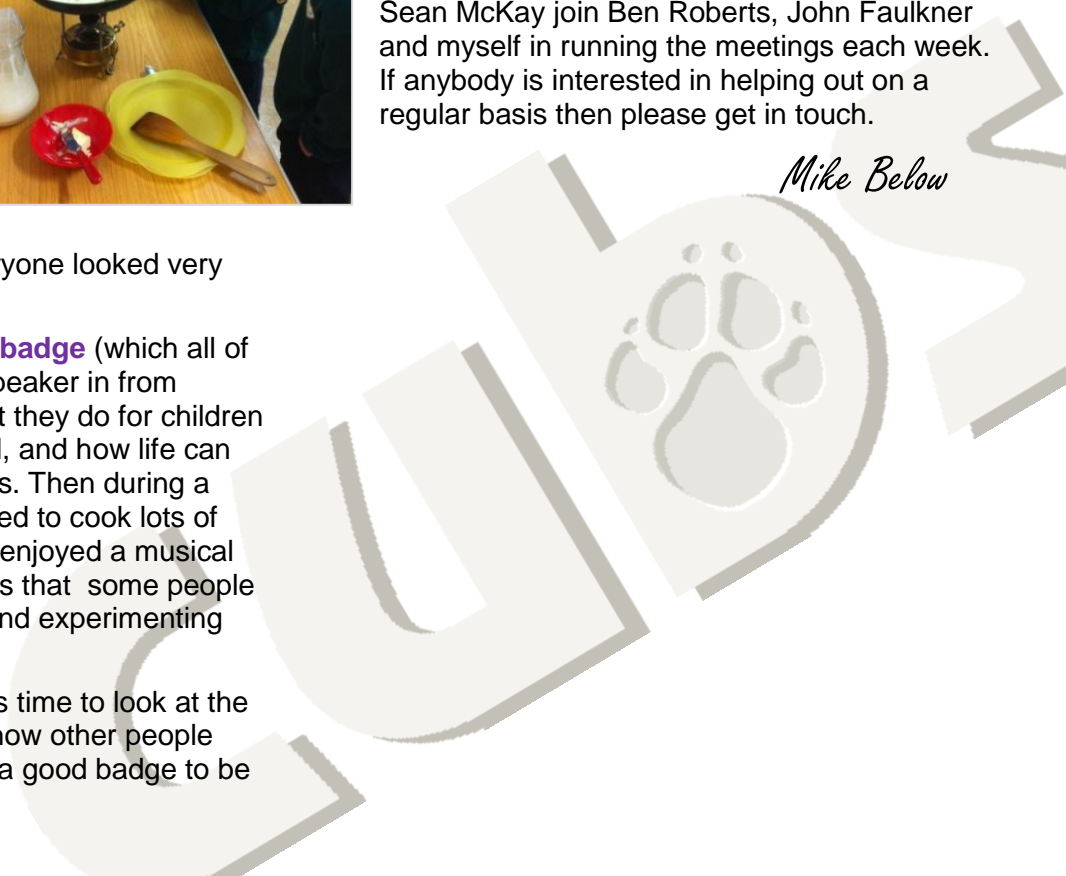
was back to cooking with **pancake night** celebrated with all Cubs cooking their own in the hall.

Looking Forward...

Next term will bring the excitements of another Cub Camp and the Family Camp in May with more meetings outside again. Also we have the St George's Day Parade in April.

During the last Summer holidays, a number of Cubs dropped out resulting in Pack numbers dropping to 18. But since then numbers have picked up enormously and we now have 28 Cubs, meaning that the Pack is very full at present. Unfortunately in September Charlotte had to drop out, but we have been lucky to have Sean McKay join Ben Roberts, John Faulkner and myself in running the meetings each week. If anybody is interested in helping out on a regular basis then please get in touch.

Mike Below



Scouts - New Members

If you are about to join Scouts or have recently joined our troop have a look at our website

www.1stgossomsendscouts.org.uk

This has most of the information about what we do at Scouts, as well as.

- ❖ a **new members letter** which explains what happens when you start and useful things to know about our Scout troop.
- ❖ a **First Time Campers** booklet that gives you lots of useful tips about camping.
- ❖ a **Camping FAQ** which explains what camp you have to do first, how to book etc.
- ❖ in the Booking section, a **list of all camps, sailing dates and events** that we run and you can book a place on online too!
- ❖ **Camp reports and photos** from previous camps.
- ❖ Information about where to put your badges on your uniform.



- ❖ **Summer camp** We will be going to the Kandersteg International Scout Centre in Switzerland for 2 weeks.

If you would like to go on any of these events please book ASAP via our website as places are often limited. If your child has recently joined and you are unsure if a camp is suitable or if your child is eligible to come please ask me.

Andy Robinson



Look in the **calendar** each week to see what's planned for our Thursday meeting. It also says if you need to wear uniform or to wear casual clothes (activity dress) and lists anything you need to bring and if we are meeting somewhere else other than the Scout hall.

We have our own private **Facebook** group for older Scouts, parents and leaders to talk about our activities and shares photos of events, and publish event information that we would not want to put on our public website. If you are on Facebook and would like to join just search for '1st Gossoms End Scouts' and request to be added and an admin will approve your request once we recognise who you are.

Future Events...

- ❖ **Sailing** once a month between May and October
- ❖ **Weekend Camps** include: District Frosties Camp, Basic Skills camp, Backpacking Camp, Camp cook, Raft Building camp, Bivi Camp, Herts Green Beret competition & our PL Winter Camp
- ❖ **Easter camp** We are on going to Jersey in the Channel Islands for a week of activities.

Second Scout Troop

On Wednesday 18th April 2012 we will see our second scout troop open, the "1st Gossoms End Jubilee Scout Troop". Leaders Adrian Truman-Williams, Darren Lavin and occasional helper Paul Suchodolski have come together to establish the troop.

The demand for a new troop was evident in a high interest level. Young people elected are pleased to be participating and will help to develop the new troop. The first term's programme has been centred on camping, learning new skills and plenty of team building exercises. Throughout the year the troop's intention is to put these skills to test and carry out some camping expeditions.

Darren Lavin