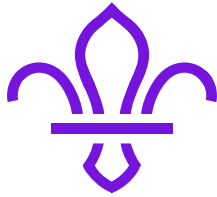


# Scouts

## 1st Northwood



### Group Scout Leader Report

Welcome to the 100th edition of the 1st Northwood Scout Group's newsletter. Before I start my report I must thank Geoff Pitt for the time that he has spent putting each edition together. I know how difficult it is to chase people for their articles time after time but I do hope that for this 100th edition everything will have been submitted before his deadline.

I must not forget Trevor Alexander, the previous editor, who initially started the newsletter. I do wonder if he ever thought it would still be going 100 editions later. Back in the early days, the pictures were black and white and I am sure you will all agree that colour photos make a world of difference.

Scouting is always changing but to be honest it has changed more in the past three months than in all the thirty years I have been involved with the Group. Having used Zoom for work meetings, I was used to participating in the type of meeting where all you really do is sit back and listen and make the odd comment every now and then. But how do you keep a group of young people interested and engaged while running a scout meeting over Zoom? Well, it hasn't been easy, constantly trying to get activities to do but there is one thing that Scout leaders do better than most and that is sharing ideas and what works well and what didn't...

In fact, the week before lockdown, all the Scout leaders in the District met up to discuss activities that had been planned for the next term. The conversation soon got round to COVID-19 and a possible lockdown and suspension of Scouting. What would we do? The idea of running meetings over Zoom soon came up. Not that anybody had tried it before but we did brainstorm some ideas which we used in the first couple of sessions. As well as regular local sharing across the District we have also been supported nationally and internationally with the help of a 1<sup>st</sup> Virtual Scout Facebook Group being created very early on in the lockdown.

All the sections in the Group were soon on-line and got to grips with running a meeting remotely. The attendance has been good across the sections, which is great to see and as well as the enjoyment on the young peoples' faces seeing their scouting friends online. All the leaders have put time and effort into making these meetings successful and I am sure that you will agree they have all done a marvelous job.

Lots of badge work has been completed and as a Group we have hiked to the moon, attended a group quiz evening and also made Easter Cards for Northwood Live at Home and pictures for St Vincent's Nursing Home.

### The Smartie Game

This is best played with a tube of Smarties, emptied in front of all the players. The answer to each question is one of the Smartie colours and if you are first with the answer, you eat the Smartie. If all the Smarties of the right colour are gone, well tough.

Now I could provide questions, but you are far more clever than me and can incorporate the making of the questions into the game. Either everyone writes three (or more) questions on separate bits of paper, folds them and selects one randomly or the winner of the last Smartie is exempt from the next round but has to create the next question. Or....

If Smarties are sold out, buy other sweets for rewards but use the colours of Smarties; Red, Green, Blue, Yellow, Orange, Pink, Purple and Brown. Or not..... adapt! Enjoy!

**Roxanna Peters, Group Secretary**



## Group Scout Leader Report, continued

Scouting via Zoom is going to be with us for many months to come I believe so please bear with us. Some activities will go well and some not so well but it is certainly not for lack of effort on the part of the leaders.

Since I started drafting this report, we have received the welcome news from the Scout Association that the sections can now have face to face meetings but it must be outside and in small groups. Before we actually get to that stage there are several hoops that we have to jump through including completing a COVID 19 Risk Assessment to use the land outside the Scout HQ which is in hand. To complete this, we sent out a survey to get parents'/carers' views, and were very pleased that of the thirty replies received as I write this, ninety percent are ready to come back as soon as possible and the remainder once the situation improves further. Across the national Scouting network it is anticipated that there will be a drop off in membership so we will be doing exceptionally well to keep all our members – thank you for your support of such an amazing Group. The leadership team have taken the decision not to return until September which allows us time to assess how we can work within the restrictions that are now in place and to plan programmes that meet the social distancing rules.

As you will read elsewhere, Poindextor Explorer Scout Unit have already had a successful activity evening at Paccar Camp Site following the strict rules that the camp site have put in place which shows that face to face Scouting is possible in this new regime.

More details will be sent out over the Summer and written authority will be required before each member will be allowed to attend. I do look forward to the day we can go back to meeting face to face in our fabulous Scouting Centre. Until that day please all take care of yourselves and stay safe.

**Mike Bennett, Group Scout Leader**

## Chairman's Chat

According to my records this edition of the newsletter is the one hundredth we have published. The first edition appeared in 1989. Several members of the Group have taken on the role of editor and the position is currently held by Geoff Pitt who undertakes his duties seriously and maintains a high standard. Geoff has introduced pictures in colour which appeals to the children. We hope you continue to enjoy reading the articles he has received which may cover less activities than usual for reasons which are apparent to all in the current circumstances.

Almost twelve months after Allan Hardwick passed away, his wife Margaret died peacefully at home on the 16th April. Their family Ian, Alistair and Anne Marie were with her at the time. In recent years Margaret was unfortunately confined to her bed but she seemed to cope with this affliction and managed to attend Allan's funeral.

Mainly through 1st News, Margaret enjoyed keeping up to date with the activities we organised including the jumble sales at which she used to help. We anticipate a wake in memory of Margaret may take place at the Scout Centre once restrictions are eased.

When you experience stormy waters as we have over the past six months you need to ensure there is a strong and experienced team in place to cope with whatever challenges we encounter along the way. Judging by the amount of activity in the various sections it is clear that our DC, GSL and Leaders definitely have a very firm grip on the situation and will do whatever it takes to ensure that Scouting in our area recovers fully and thrives again.

**Paul Akers**  
Executive Committee Chairman

## The New Little Hut

You may remember that in the April edition of First News I reported that we didn't quite manage to get our new store shed delivered before the Lockdown – we missed it by three days!

Well, Passmores started working again in late May and on 29th May they delivered and put up our new store.

It's a store shed for 362 days a year where we keep tables, gazebos and lots of Jumble Sale related equipment. Then for Jumble Sale days it gets turned into a Tea and Snacks stall, and it has two opening shutters which we use as serving hatches.

During June I fitted it out with storage shelving and folding worktops for the serving hatches, and of course we have had some power and lights fitted. It's been filled up with "stuff" and is all ready for next year's Jumble Sale.

**Richard Plume**  
Executive Committee Member



*Margaret Hardwick 1936 - 2020*

## Group Activities

In June, we should have been on Group Family Camp with the rest of the District at Phasels Campsite. This obviously couldn't go ahead so instead we organised a family quiz over Zoom on the same weekend which was attended by eighteen families. The questions ranged from Scouting to flags and geography to films with dogs in! Everyone enjoyed the evening and we may do another one in the autumn.

Having found that we can do anything on Zoom, it was time to replace the Group Family Camp with a Virtual Camp. We only camped for one night but just as much fun was had by the twenty-three who took part, from younger siblings to our oldest Scout. So how do you camp Virtually? With regular catch ups over the weekend on Zoom and a closed Facebook group used to share pictures of what everybody was getting up to it did feel as though you were together and sharing an experience.

We started with a "meeting" for flag break and to explain the weekend plus a scavenger hunt for the first challenge. Then the campers went offline to pitch their tents, lay a tracking trail and build a bug hotel as well as have some well earned lunch. The afternoon "meeting" was to introduce water activities – origami water bomb making and balancing (empty) cups on your head. Before they disappeared off to introduce the water to the challenge we "took part" in some adrenalin fueled fun watching first person videos of zip wires, toboggan runs and white water rafting – one Cub voted this as the best part of the weekend! After some offline time to try the water activities out and build a zip wire or fairground ride we "met" again to make pizzas for tea so we all had the same dinner at the same time in our different kitchens across Northwood.

The leaders entertained everybody with some absolutely delightful singing around the camp fire with lots of action songs for everybody to enjoy in our final Zoom meet on Saturday before everyone went off to have toasted marshmallows and/or snores and to sleep. The camp finished on the Sunday with a final "meet" for a game of Guess Who and a Kahoot quiz. Everybody looked fresh except those who slept out overnight! The leaders liked the camp at home element as they weren't kept up on the first night of camp by chatting Cubs or woken up early the next morning by Scouts wanting to play football! But we are still looking forward to our first proper camp when we are allowed.

**Mike Bennett, Group Scout Leader**



## Plant Sale

Ros and I have run a charity Plant Sale every year since 1993, and while Coronavirus stopped most things, we weren't going to let it stop this! So we held a mini Click and Collect Plant Sale – obviously we couldn't have our usual giant extravaganza at the Scouting Centre this year. We collected a substantial number of plant donations from our regular local contributors, and produced a catalogue of everything we had been given, including pictures – it included perennials, shrubs, fruit and veg, herbs and indoor plants - 53 different varieties!!!

We sent the catalogue to everyone on email and handled a flurry of email orders over the weekend of 27th/28th June.

As usual all the proceeds were shared between 1st Northwood Scouts and the Northwood Live at Home Scheme. The total value of plants sold was £306; and the total takings were £497, which shows us that additional donations of £191 were made on top of the selling prices. A very worthwhile result.

Thanks to all who contributed plants and/or money. And we can at least say "we never closed"!

**Richard Plume**  
Executive Committee Member

## Beaver Blog

Since the last Newsletter we have all been going through very strange times, but as true Scouts we have carried on Scouting! We switched to Zoom meetings. I think it was the leaders that had to learn quickly and the Beavers took to it easily... clever Beavers, and of course parents.

Some of our Zoom meetings: scavenger hunts, which seem to be a favourite! Learning about Endangered Animals, we even learned about an animal none of us had heard of before... Wow: we did experiments using household liquids and made some pretty colours; the Beavers learnt about Bepi Columbo space mission for the Space badge. We also covered safety, learnt how to do knots, peeled veg and fruit... then ate it... yum! Learnt about Scouts in another country (Greece) and countries flags and discussed Black Lives Matter and its importance.

We had a great talent show, the leaders were very impressed at everyone's exceptional talents and had a few good laughs at the brilliant jokes.

We had a very special guest join us for disability awareness. Jenny joined us with Eddie who is an absolutely gorgeous and amazing Therapy dog, he was so well behaved and the Beavers really loved it and learned so much.

Next week we are welcoming another guest to teach us all first aid, we are then over the Summer holidays running some joint Zoom meetings with the Cubs and Scouts, which I'm sure is going to be so much fun.

Also through this lockdown period the Beavers have joined in with the world record sleepover, Group virtual camp, Group Quiz, cooking and VE Day celebrations, St Georges Day Clap, District Beaver Quiz, Hike to the moon for BBC comic relief and Beavers have also been working on badges themselves at home.

So as you can see even though distanced and having to do things virtually we have achieved quite a lot, thank you to all the Beavers, parents and siblings for sticking with us and to all the special guests for helping us out. Have a lovely summer break and looking forward to hopefully getting back to normal- ish and face to face meetings asap.

Oh, also the Beavers chose new names for us which we love.

**Panda (Wendy) & Bluebell (Gabrielle)**



*St. George's Day Clap*

## Scout Report

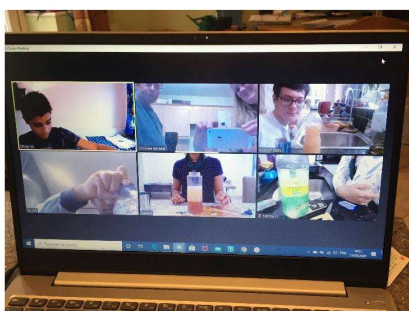
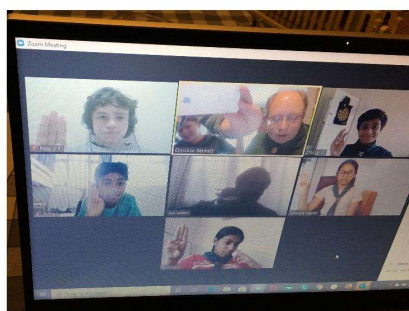
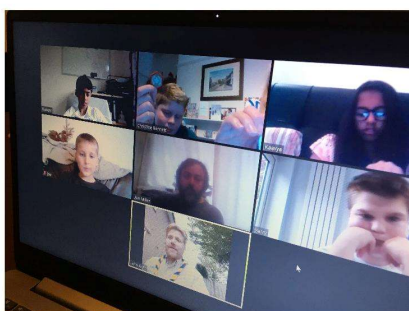
The Scout section has been meeting on Zoom since April with mixed results. Numbers have been fairly constant but some have decided that Scouting via Zoom is not for them so hopefully they will be back when we return face to face.

Neethna and Keevya had been with the Troop since the New Year and were due to be invested just as lockdown kicked in. Not wanting them to miss out, we posted their badges and scarves through their door and invested them on Zoom – a first for me and the Troop! It seemed to have gone down well, which is what is important.

The meetings have been reduced in length to approximately an hour which is just short enough to keep everybody's attention and has worked well. Several evenings have been spent watching and actually participating in science experiments at home. Some were more successful than others but from what I could see everybody had a great time. I must say thanks to Connor Clark our young leader for taking a lead on this. A cooking evening was fun, messy but very tasty and there were lots of smiling faces at the end of the evening. Whoever thought you could make so much mess making a cake in a mug? A giant game of Battleships was played one evening with the target being tents rather than the battleships of the original game. Although this is a game it gave everybody a chance to use the fundamentals of grid references for fun.

The Scouts have enjoyed using Kahoot for all sorts of quizzes, general knowledge, Scouting history and mapping symbols. We also had a successful night working our way through an Escape Room shared by Telford Scout leader, Sam Wright, who was part of our District.

### Mike Bennett, Group Scout Leader



*Investitures, Science Night & Luke Bennett Receiving his Chief Scout Gold Award*

## Impromptu Presentation

10am on Friday 31st July found Richard Plume at the Scouting Centre waiting for District Chairman, Paul Spencer, to deliver some scrap metal. Paul delivered not only scrap metal but also an item of great value – the Silver Wolf Award.

Richard received a letter from Bear Grylls, the Chief Scout earlier this year informing him that he had been awarded the Silver Wolf, but Covid-19 meant that ideas for a presentation and celebration had to be put on hold.

The Silver Wolf is the highest award in Scouting, the unrestricted gift of the Chief Scout, and is only awarded for service of a most exceptional nature. The Silver Wolf is usually a St George's Day Award but can be awarded at other times in exceptional circumstances, hence the reason for the surprise presentation.

I'm sure you'll agree that this award is well-deserved and a fitting acknowledgement of all that Richard has achieved in the Scout movement over the last 50+ years, not least in over-seeing the 1st Northwood New Scouting Centre project. Congratulations!

### Christine Bennett District Commissioner



*The Silver Wolf Award*

## Cub Collation

When I wrote the last newsletter we'd had a few weeks with no face to face meetings from mid March to April; at that stage we didn't expect to have a whole term without face to face meetings but that's what has happened. Despite not being able to meet up at the Scout HQ, meetings have continued with Cubs and Leaders getting to grips with Zoom. None of us knew how to run Cubs without being in the same place but with some inventive thinking and support from Leaders around the UK and abroad sharing ideas on a Facebook group we have survived the term with more than 65% attendance most weeks.

So, what can you do with everyone logged in to their own computers at home? Well, we covered the Air Activity badge over three weeks including making Whirly Gigs (paper helicopters) and a visit from Richard Plume and friend to tell the Cubs all about hot air ballooning and light aircraft flying. Those that created their own ideal plane at home soon earned a badge. We have made cakes in mugs and played a variety of games discovered by Baloo.

The Cubs were keen to share their pets with each other so we were introduced to several cats, a tortoise, a Bearded Dragon, hamsters, guinea pigs and baby chicks. Those that didn't have a pet told us about a friend's pet or their dream pet (a white horse for Pryana) or their adopted giraffe (Eden.) Lots of Cubs are now working towards their animal carer badge. We have also looked at environmental conservation and ways to save energy and the importance of recycling setting us off on another badge or two.

At the beginning of the year, the Scout County launched a special badge for the year, the 20in20 Challenge which had to be updated once remote Scouting started. We have encouraged the whole Pack to do the Challenge with activities ranging from helping out at home with cleaning and cooking; supporting the local community by producing pictures for St Vincent's Care Home (see our website for examples); logging daily walks to reach a target and much more. On Pack Nights, our environmental conservation work counted towards the badge and we welcomed David Simmonds MP to our meeting who told us about being an MP.

During the term Beavers have turned eight and Cubs reached ten and a half years old, which are the ages for moving sections. The members involved were asked if they wanted to move on over Zoom or wait with their current section for a bit longer - in these unusual times, the choice was theirs. We therefore welcomed Laila and Asyia into Cubs after half term and said goodbye to Mariam. Harry, Charlie, Joe and McKenzie who have started in Scouts over Zoom. Our last meeting of term saw the new Cubs invested and the old Cubs come back to join in the end of term badge presentation. We were very pleased that despite all the challenges of the last four months. Harry, Charlie, Joe and Benjy all completed their Chief Scout Silver Awards, the top award in Cubs.

It has been very strange term but full of our usual fun and adventure. We must thank all the parents who have had to get involved in supporting the Cubs with activities especially the cooking and craft. As we start preparing for the Autumn, we hope to have some face to face meetings but Zoom will no doubt still be part of our programme planning. Enjoy the summer.

### Akela (Christine) and Baloo (Parina)



*Cubs on Zoom*



*Summer Pictures for St.Vincent's Care Home*



*Hiking to the Moon*



*Chief Scout Silver Award*

## Explorer Round-up

Explorer Scouting in these unusual times isn't what any of us are used to. The last time Poindextor met before lockdown there were fifty-one Explorers at the meeting; no face to face activities has meant looking at creative ways to engage as many of the Explorers as possible in the programme.

Cooking is a programme favourite with different levels of ability and success; it is quality over the quantity of finished product. During Lockdown, Explorers have cooked pizza and cakes. I could never imagine cooking twenty-five pizzas on a meeting night from scratch; for one thing the oven is not big enough! But with the joy of Zoom it happened and there was no clearing up at the end of the meeting; a bonus for the Leaders if not the parents! Cakes in a mug had varying outcomes as dessert courses on the same night.

Drop-in Duke of Edinburgh sessions have been taking place on Zoom for Gold, Silver and Bronze to help keep the Explorers engaged until we can get back to face to face meetings. Whilst expeditions are out, a change in requirements meant physical, skills and volunteering could continue.

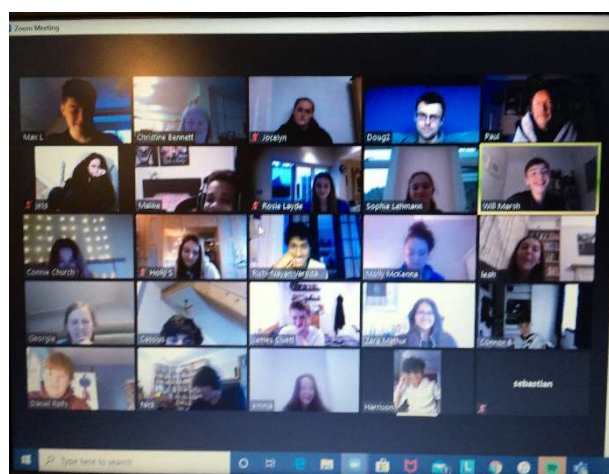
Weekly Zoom meetings have continued with more than twenty attending every week; we've probably "seen" at least sixty percent of the Unit at some point during the term. The Explorers have had Quizzes, played online Pictionary, and completed a virtual Monopoly run amongst other sessions. Challenges have also been sent by email for them to do in their own time with them sending back pictures of their efforts; Emma created an impressive Easter cake! So, despite the challenges, new skills have been learnt and old skills remembered.

The plan to get back to face-face meeting starts at Red Alert (no face to face meetings) and finishes with Green, with Amber and Yellow in between. We are now at Amber, which means we can do outside activities in groups of twelve plus three leaders with social distancing in place but not indoor meetings. With PACCAR re-opening, thirty-four Explorers jumped at the chance to form three groups and take part in an outdoor activity for the last three weeks of term. With Air Rifles, Zip Wire, Archery, Abseiling and the Gladiator Challenge available, it was good to start on the journey to face - face meetings resuming on a Thursday night.

### Doug Horgan - AESL



*Pizza Cooking*



*Zoom Quiz*