

April 2017 to March 2018 AGM Report – 1st Wargrave Scout Section

We had another busy fun year at 1st Wargrave Scouts and continued with our focus on badgework. Our aim is to give everyone a chance of “going for gold” and achieving the “Chief Scout Gold Award”. Subject to regular attendance on Monday evenings, joining-in camps and completing a large array of tasks to a satisfactory standard, every Scout has an equal opportunity to attain the highest award in Scouting.

In April Scouts enjoyed a patrol sewing evening and listened to hobby presentations. Lucy, Luke and Jake represented 1st Wargrave at the Loddon District Field Archery, Target Archery & Rifle Shooting Competition achieving 6th place. We also welcomed 4 new Scouts from Cubs - Isla, Megan and Ellis from Puma's and Louis from Wildcats. We finished the Spring term somehow managing to squeeze a record 28 Scouts into the hut!

With the start of the Summer term we made use of the lighter warmer evenings spending time up in Bowsey Woods for an orienteering challenge, one stick cooking, and outside for a pioneering evening and we also held a mock “General Election!”.

In June we had a reflection evening with the Scouts revisiting and learning about the Scout Promise & Law. Scouts staffed the water stations for the Wargrave 10K at the Horns and Wargrave Manor. We visited Stanlake Meadows in Twyford for a Patrol assault course challenge and we tracked the progress Scouts were making towards completing their personal challenges. On Mill Green the Scouts had fun setting-up a NERF Gun Shooting Alley for the Wargrave Festival and walked with the “Out of This World” themed float! Our Summer Term “Night Out” was spent on the water at Dinton Pastures, stand up paddle boarding. The term ended with a Summer BBQ and more NERF Gun games (a particular favourite!).

The highlight of the year was our 4-day “Concorde Camp” at Walton Firs, Chobham. As well as camping and cooking the Scouts took part in air rifle target shooting, caving, crate stacking, low ropes and pioneering. The Scouts completed a day hike over to Brooklands Motor Museum visiting the 4D Theatre and the Concorde Museum.

The Autumn Term started with our traditional “patrol pancakes”, and then the PL's and APL's ran a rules & regulations exercise. Scouts hiked from Knowl Hill through Bowsey Woods and completed a Country Code quiz and a wellbeing debate. Several of our Scouts entered the Loddon District Great Breakfast Chase Incident Hike. For the first time we also held a DIY home skills evening where Scouts learned how to wire a plug and discovered the essentials of plumbing!

At the end of October, the Hut was transformed into a radio and internet chat station for the annual JOTA “Jamboree On The Air” enabling our Cubs and Scouts to communicate with over one million Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Brownies and Guides across the world in 150 countries. Greetings were sent to young people in Indonesia, Brazil, China and Trinidad. Contact was also made with one of the Scouts from the troop that hosted us at the Finland International Jamboree in July 2016.

In November Scouts supported the Village Remembrance Service & Parade. They also learnt from a chef how to bone and cook a chicken and made reindeer hyacinth bulb holders as part of the Xmas craft evening. Scouts also made fires and cooked biscuits in a barrel stove up in Bowsey Woods. The term finished with a particularly fun evening run by Reading Fencing Club! Scouts also sorted and delivered over 1,500 letters as part of the Wargrave Xmas Post and entertained parents and friends at the 5th Almost Christmas Show.

In January 2018, Scouts restarted with an Adventure Activity discussion, a camp hygiene & first aid evening and Pancake making! The Patrol Leaders spent time planning their expedition weekend a 2-day independent hike in April in the New Forest. The Scouts also held a social media safety evening, completed a “chip shop hike” and a “what is expected of a Scout?” and a Dragons Den competition to design their ideal Monday evening – all as part of February's national #YouShape month. After half-term we held our 4th “Winter Camp” at the Hut which is a great introductory camp and a weekend activity that seems to be established as a firm favourite in our annual calendar. Our Spring Term “Troop Night Out” was Laser Quest at the new Wokingham Big Apple. We also welcomed Jazz, Jacq, and Chloe from Cubs. The term ended with a “knots, knots and more knots” evening where the PL's taught the Scouts (and the Leaders!) how to tie knots. An important life skill whether you are mountaineering, fishing or in the garden!

We managed to somehow get through the year with just 3 Leaders (we had 5 last year) and I am indebted and extremely thankful to Richard and Paul for their support and dedication every Monday - helping Wargrave Scouts learn and experience so many new skills and activities over the past 12 months.

For sure we need new parents to come forward as Paul is due to leave us at the end of December. Additional help on Mondays is required so that we can expand our programme. We also have a backlog of Cubs that are wanting to join and currently no room at the hut on Monday evenings. There has been talk at the Executive Committee of forming a second Scout section on a Wednesday evening. We will need new parents to come forward as Leaders if that idea is to turn into reality over the next 12 months. If you are interested in “giving back to the village” either on an ad-hoc basis on Monday evenings, or at Weekend Camps please do let me know, you would be very welcome to join the Scout leadership team.

Pete Walsh, 1st Wargrave Scout Leader