

4th Newbury Scout Troop, Annual Report 2012-2013

We all know these reports read as a diary of the last year's events, and to be honest this isn't going to be any different this year. I'm proud of the things the Scouts have achieved in the last 12 months and this is my chance to shout about it, so you're just going to have to bear with me.

With the AGM later than usual last year due to rather nasty weather, for this report the year starts on Group Camp at Walton Firs in September. The weather was kind to us and we stayed dry for the weekend. The Scouts enjoyed artificial caving, crate climbing and Frisbee golf, as well as a small Group Campfire that may have got an little bit larger than intended – see the photos on the website!



Campfire's Burning, Campfire's Burning – take a step back!!

The end of the month was the District Archery competition – it's fair to say that Kevin Costner hasn't got anything to worry about from the Troop, but we attended and put in a good effort – no silverware though, but that will come....

We took part in Jamboree on the Internet in October – setting up our internet station and getting in touch with Scouts from all over the world during this annual event. It's a good opportunity for the young people to learn about the differences between Scouting in other countries, and helps them towards their Global Challenge Award.

With the dark nights, it's usually a term of indoor activities, but the hardy ventured out under canvas on the first weekend of December for a weekend camp. Hats and gloves were a permanent fixture as the temperatures were a tad chilly for even the most hardened camper – but everyone sat out the weekend with a good dose of British determination...

As ever the term finished with the Xmas Carol service in the Church and the Scouts managed to entertain the audience with a few traditional Scout sketches to finish off 2012.

2013 arrived far too quick for the leaders, we hadn't recovered from that Christmas excess to write a programme yet. However, the January-February months always see us doing a little preparation for a small District event called the Alamo. This is an overnight incident hike that the older Scouts participate in, navigating the route without adult supervision and completing a number of scouting challenges on route. In 2012 we were robbed guv'nor, when clearly the best team came second and it is fair to say we weren't going to let that happen again. The Scouts showed determination to learn the navigation skills they'd need on the event and spent quite a few cold dark hours trudging through the wet West Berkshire countryside... Then the night arrived, there was a bit of concern as the weather wasn't too pretty – thunder, lightning and a bit of hail for good measure, but it'll take more than that to stop us! Our 2 teams wandered out into the darkness that night, with the rest of the District as competition and there were a few nervous moments during the event as scores were tallied and the long wait till the results in the morning. But the hard work

was worth it, we finished not only 1st, but 2nd too – proving beyond doubt that we are the Masters of the Alamo in Kennet District!! Which is pleasing to the leaders as this is a Scouting based competition. After Easter we had the traditional St George's Day Parade, and I need to take this opportunity to thank the Scouts for the consistently good turn outs they make to these less-than-exciting events. Both Remembrance Day and St George's Day Parades were very well attended by the Troop.

May is becoming a bit of a tradition, we venture out onto the canal for a typical Scout rafting night. Honestly, if they stay together and float that's usually a novelty. The picture of barrels going one way, while the raft heads in a different direction is not an uncommon sight. But the nights in the hall learning knots and doing some practice in the dry paid off. The two rafts survived the evening with very few mishaps ensuring that all who had taken part in their construction had a good opportunity to ~~soak the other team~~ go paddling!

Kennet District Camp was a big event in May, with the District camping on Englefield estate. The Scouts camping for the weekend, the Beavers visiting us for the Saturday. Sadly the Cubs due to the number of other events during the year and prior commitments could not join us for what was a fun filled weekend. There was the odd spot of rain, but it didn't seem to dampen spirits and the Scouts attacked most of the activities with gusto, even the craft activities seemed to provide an attraction, which is unusual – but it came as no great surprise that they enjoyed the Army assault course the most. I probably should apologise to those of you still trying to get the cammo paint off their kit!

With the improved weather the last couple of months have seen us outside a little bit more often, we've squeezed in another weekend camp at Thirtover where the weather was kind to us – and the Grass Sledges seemed to be the most popular activity of the weekend.



Sledge Crash just waiting to happen!

We entered the District Football competition, there was unusually few Scouts entries this year, but we gave it our best shot (no pun intended), and to the Scouts that took part their efforts were rewarded by winning the trophy, for the 6th year in succession. I could say we won by the skin of our teeth, but as someone else not too far away will also say – no-one ever remembers who came 2nd, so I'm sure I'll figure out a way to squeeze another silver shield on the overcrowded trophy somehow

We had an evening at Greenham Common doing some Athletics – I got told off, apparently a pioneering pole is not a suitable relay race baton, I didn't see the problem myself....

Also in the last 2 weeks we have visit the Waterside centre and had some fun on their indoor climbing wall.

The coming weeks see us outdoors until the end of term, making the most of the good weather in the build up to the Troop's annual Summer Camp. This year we're off to Taunton, Somerset for a week where we have various activities planned for the Scouts including Gliding, Caving, High Ropes and a visit to Fleet Air Arm to name a few. The Summer Camp should always be the highlight of the Scout calendar and I hope this

year will be no different. The Scouts will be cooking on log fires, camping in patrol tents and working as Patrols – one of the most valuable lessons in Scouting is the importance of team-work, and this type of camping is key to getting the Scouts working together. All prayers for sunshine that week will be gratefully received.

Some numbers for you

- Average 26 Scouts
- 39 Monday evening meetings
- 16 overnight events
- 12 additional 1 day events

Running a Troop with that many members and activities is not the responsibility of just me, I might be the leader, but without the regular help of Nigel, Gemma and Matt it simply wouldn't be possible to provide all the activities that we do. The Scout Leader Team works well together, playing to each other's strengths and that's what allows us to offer balanced Scouting throughout the year to the young people.

Here's hoping that the next 12 months will provide equal, if not better even quality of Scouting for the Troop!

Bruce.

4th Newbury (St. Johns), Scout Leader

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