

SITTINGBOURNE AND MILTON DISTRICT NEWS

Well what a bang! back to reality after spending three and a half weeks in New Zealand, returning from the mid summer weather to minus figures here and in to the middle of Census returns, Insurance claims and Scout activities! And not to mention work! I managed to meet up with some Scouts in New Zealand, and we had a really fun evening bowling with them and we were made extremely welcome. If there is one aspect of Scouting that I really find rewarding is that you can meet up with other scouts throughout the world and you are always made welcome. Unfortunately we only managed to meet up with them for one evening as this was their last evening before there summer holidays. However we have some plans to do some international activities with them in the future such as web cam chats etc.

So I know it's a bit late, but as this is the first news letter of the new year, Happy New Year to you all.

Anyhow firstly let me thank those of the district team who have kept everything running whilst I have been away and to those GSL's and support staff who have been beavering away getting your census returns done. A special mention must go to the District secretary Helen Harlow who has been spending an enormous amount for time trying to work out what we are supposed to be doing and getting the data input. This at a time when we should be concentrating on Christmas and our families. I know I am new to this but why they do a Census at this time of year I don't know. Maybe one day this will be a thing of the past and we can all concentrate on delivering good quality programs and activities for each of our sections and District. SO WELL DONE TO YOU ALL.

Having seen some provisional results so far we are looking very healthy as a district, but we cannot become complacent. I have noticed that a small amount of groups have waiting lists, which is really bad news, particularly for those youngsters who are on the waiting lists. I will be contact these groups over the coming weeks to work with them to get these youngsters into the movement as soon as possible.

Also a big thank you to all those involved in the District disco (fellowship). Not having had this event for a number of years there was some doubt about the level of attendance that we could expect. However it was a great success. Thanks also to those from M and B and Teynham who helped organize some of the youngsters.

Now you will see attached a new district Diary and there are some items I need to draw your attention to. Firstly not on the Diary is the GSL's Meeting this coming Tuesday at Bexon lane. If you don't have a GSL or if you are a GSL and cant make the meeting please make sure someone from your group is represented. 3rd Feb at 8pm.

Leaders training Day. Following last years successful event another one is planned for the 13th/14th and 15th March. I know for a lot of people this is a difficult weekend, but actually a lot of the problem we all faced is that trying to find a suitable weekend is really difficult due to the Scout commitments! However this is really worth while and I would really encourage you to come along. Roger is cooking again so the food will be good, I am sure if we all pray hard enough the sun will shine and failing that the company will be good and we can always have a big fire and keep warm. This event is open to all leaders from all sections, also if you have helpers who you think would benefit from this get them along. I have attached an application form, and if you have any questions please give Barry Pike a call or Linda Curson.

We are hoping to arrange another Scout lightweight hike/bike ride camp at the end of March, a gain I would have liked to run one sooner but there are only so many weekends. Once we have a firm date and details I will endeavor to get the information out to you. But let you Scouts know something is being planned.

Details will also follow for the Fizz and quiz evening. However the Easter egg hunt has been fully arranged and I have attached the details. This is open to all sections and is meant to be just a bit of fun at Bexon Lane. It has been planned so that it will be very easy for the Beavers to find the eggs but extremely difficult for the explorers so it could be interesting. However get it in to your programme and come and join the district for a bit of fun.

As some of you noticed on the last Diary there was a conflict with St Georges Day and SEXROL. Therefore the Explorers are rearranging SEXROL and we will let you know the new day as soon as we have this.

Finally whilst on dates, County are holding a County leaders training camp on the 6th and 7th June. Details of this can be found on the Kent Scouts web site. I am sure many of you would find this really helpful they are going to be doing Pioneering, quatermastering, camping skills, maps and compass, Have a go and some odds end activities. Both this event and our own leaders training day will count towards your ongoing learning and they are very worthwhile events so try and get along to them.

Now I have been informed by headquarters that every beaver/cub/scout and explorer leader will be receiving a pack soon which will contain information for Parents and a new Parents book to tell them about Scouting and how to get

involved. Apparently more copies can be obtained from head quarters free of charge (you have to pay the postage). As we all know it is really difficult getting adults into scouting, so please make use of these booklets and target those parents you know might show an interest or have an aptitude for getting involved. On this note can you all take just a few minutes to think about your friends/ acquaintances and colleagues at work etc and ask yourself if they might have skills we can use in the scout movement. I have found this the best and most effective way of getting people involved. It is not just leaders we need either if you have friends who are administrators or managers they probably have the skills to help on executive committees etc. even if your group has enough help, other groups don't so point them in my direction!

Well I think that is enough for this month, other than to say that if you can spare some time to help on service crew days at Bexon lane, please make yourself know to Paul Dickens. The more help we have for this, the cheaper we can run Bexon lane and the more we can spend on new activities!

Yours In Scouting

Paul Austin
Sittingbourne and Milton DC