

**SITTINGBOURNE AND MILTON
DISTRICT SCOUT COUNCIL**

**ANNUAL REPORT for period
April 2008 to March 2009**

**President—Vacancy
Vice Presidents—Bill Pankhurst, Dave Passey.**

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We aim to promote the progressive development of young people in Sittingbourne and Milton District and help them to make the most out of life, by providing them with opportunities to participate in an attractive and enjoyable programme appropriately and locally delivered by an effective and fulfilled Leadership.

www.sittingbournescouts.org.uk



Chairman's Report

It seems like only a few months have passed since Paul Austin asked me to take on the role of District Chairman and yet a whole year has flown by!

And, whilst 2007 was a milestone in the history of scouting, 2008 has also been a very successful year, albeit for different reasons. First, the number of members in the District has once again soared and is now well over 800. This is the largest membership in the District since at least 2002 (which is as far back as my own memory goes!), if not much further. Secondly, during the last twelve months Bexon Lane campsite has been busier than ever before, with a huge number of young people from both within the District and outside using the site nearly every weekend from Easter through to November. Third and finally, the increase in membership numbers and use of Bexon Lane has resulted in much needed additional income being raised to maintain the facilities and more importantly increase the number of activities available for everyone to enjoy.

Within the District Executive, we are now fully established and have a really great team in place. As Trustees of the District I would like to thank everyone on the Executive for their time and effort in undertaking this very important role. Whilst we all have our part to play, I am particularly grateful to Sue Hislop who is doing an excellent job as District Treasurer, Helen Harlow who manages to fit time around everything else she is doing to be the District Secretary, and to Paul Dickens who continues to do a magnificent job as ADC Campsite. Also, whilst we are still looking for a District President, our thanks go to Bill Pankhurst and Dave Passey for their continuing support as our District Vice Presidents.

However, the biggest thanks has to go to all of the leaders, helpers and supporters of the District groups and sections who work tirelessly to ensure we fulfil our mission statement. As a non-uniformed member of the District, and like many parents whose children are part of the local scouting fraternity, it's very easy to overlook the huge amount of personal time, effort and dedication that a relatively small number of people put in every week to ensure our children get the most out of their early years. Over the last twelve months I have visited a number of Groups and not once have I been disappointed with what I have seen. All of the young people I have met look to be really enjoying themselves and benefiting from their experiences, and the energy and commitment shown by all of the leaders and helpers never fails to impress. Congratulations on another fantastic year and a huge well done to everyone from the District Executive.

Mike Gilbert
Chairman

DC's Report.

DC's report

Wow what a year, is it that I am getting older that time seems to go so fast? It seems hard to believe that it was really a year ago that I was standing up at the AGM explaining that I would be taking over as DC.

So I must say it is hard to know where to start and what to include in my section of this report having had a such a busy year.

Firstly lets start with some really good news which was the creation of two new Scout sections one at Iwade and one at 1st Milton Regis. This is excellent and is one of the reasons why the district has grown this year. The achievement here is even greater when you realise that those people who stepped up to become leaders and to run these Scout sections have never been in Scouting before. I know that it has not been easy particular as these groups do not have a great deal of funds, but what they have achieved in the last year is excellent work.

Throughout the year I have been getting my team together, unfortunately this took a little longer than I had expected. However the final role was filled in December, and we now have a full District team in place. This year we have a great programme of events for all sections which have been organised by the district team. Many of which are the type of events not held in the district before, some examples are the Cubs canoe day, a district Beaver sleep over and the programme of lightweight camps. Just take a look at the District Diary and you will see some of the things that have been planned.

We are also lucky now to have all the Scout sections available in the District from Beavers through to Network and Fellowship. A particular note of thanks must go to the Fellowship who I know have provided invaluable support to both the district and groups within it, as well as supporting the County at certain events.

Now of course not everything always runs smoothly, and part of the fun of the job is resolving some of the issues we have! During the year the camp site was broken into and approximately £2300 of equipment was stolen, or damaged, and although this has now been replaced it has taken almost 6 months for the claim to be settled and enormous amounts of my time dealing with this matter, time which could have been better spent providing activities for our young people.

We also had the sad loss of Len Saxton to the movement who passed away recently. I understand Len had been involved in Scouting for a number of years and was a real loss to the movement. Len was GSL at Lower Halstow, and he has now been replaced by Sean McDonough who I am sure will do a grand job.

I would also ask you to take a look around you, and hopefully you will note that the building and the site is in a very good condition. It is only like this due to the dedicate team of camp site crew who come to the site regularly and make sure it is kept in tip top condition, This year we were fortunate in being able to get some support from EDF Energy who came in a painted the inside of the building for us. This saved us a considerable amount of money and time and effort. However there are still many tasks that need to be done and we are always in need of more help both financial and physical.

So what are my aims for the district for the coming year. Well I would like to see the district camp site have some more activities available hopefully some of these will be available soon, this will help us attract more users to the site and will also give the young people in the district some more exciting things to do. We hope to have the climbing wall available more often and more people authorised to erect it and use it to spread the work load. However we really do need to as a district find away of raising more funds than those available to us via the capitation. Fortunately we make quite a bit of money from other youth groups who use our site, however we have seen some massive increase in our costs this year, both in energy use, Insurance costs and waste disposal. Therefore over the coming year one of the aims of the district must be to look for new sources of income and to take advantage of some of the grants available to youth groups.

I know that our Chairman has already thanked some of the members of the executive team. However I want to thank those who have stood down this year, namely Ann Turk and Shelia McGee. Thank you very much for your help and assistance.

Paul Austin
District Commissioner.

Fellowship Report

It is now a year since I took over as ADC Fellowship, although the time seems to have flown by! During the last year, there has been a slow but steady growth in Fellowship members – there are now 35 compared to 25 in 2008. However, it has to be said that not all of these are active members, and several have not managed to attend any events.

The main aims of the District Fellowship are to provide active support for Scouting, and to provide a sociable group for adult members of the Scout Association. Many members are unable to help with Sections due to work commitments and so the Fellowship is a way to be involved in Scouting even if unable to commit much time. Anyone over the age of 18 is able to join, and there is no upper age limit!

Active support

In the last year we have provided regular support as members of the Service Crew at the District Campsite. All the Duty Wardens, and of course the ADC Campsite, are members of the Fellowship, meeting regularly to maintain and care for the campsite. Some of our members have also helped at various different Groups throughout the year, whether particular skills such as pioneering or map reading, or just to support them if they are short of Leaders for any reason. We have also helped some Groups with their fundraising activities. We are always keen to hear about any help you may need with your Sections. Other District events we have supported include the Bike Ride, the Christmas Party, Patrol Leaders and Explorers Camp, the Carol Service and St George's Day Parade.

Social events

As a group, we try to meet monthly at a local pub for a social gathering, although this may be reviewed shortly. We have also held several rambles followed by a pub lunch, which are always popular. Other events have included a Barbecue and an American Supper. Recently we went to the Maidstone Gang Show which was an enjoyable (and inspiring!) evening.

The future

The main aim is to continue growing the membership, as the more of us there are, the more we can achieve together. Particular target areas are Leaders who have to step down due to other commitments, and perhaps interested parents and former Scouts. I would also like to build stronger links with the District Network and Explorers.

Claire Cardy
ADC Fellowship

Beaver Report



The Beaver Colonies in our District are, as ever running really well. This has to be put down to an excellent group of leaders, assistants and young leaders. Without

these people our District would not be as successful as it is. It was not until I had attended a couple of ADC meetings that I appreciated just how well off and successful we are! Thanks must go to Liz Stevens for giving up her time over recent years to be ADC Beavers and helping guide our District Beavers to what they are today. Thanks Liz, I hope I am able to build on your success and carry us forward. Thanks also to Elaine Nappy for being my right hand and helping with the admin and letting me know when I arranged those meetings for!

Over the past year we have taken part in several District Events. We had a space themed day at the Warren which was great fun for all those who took part.

We also held a Beetle Drive through which the Beavers raised £41 for Children In Need. As well as being great fun this went towards the Kent Invicta Challenge for all those who took part.

Beavers took part in the Remembrance Day Parade for the first time. Their behaviour and resilience in the cold weather was exemplary – well done to you all!

At Christmas the disco was enjoyed by all who went and the Carol Service was both excellent and well attended!

More recently there has been a county trip to the hop farm at Paddock Wood. The Beavers have not been yet as I am writing this but I am sure they will have a great time.

Planned for later on in the year is a fun day at Bexon Lane with a Wild West theme. Alongside this will be our first district sleepover.

In September we will be holding a day in the woods where Beavers will try their hands at traditional scouting skills.

All groups have been busy this year with a wide range of activities encompassing sleepovers, a trip to Brownsea Island, activity days and much more.

Well done to you all – I hope the forthcoming year will be even more successful – Let's build on the success we already have and make our District Beavers the best to be found!

Kathryn Shires ADC Beavers

Cub Report



I was invited to undertake the role of ADC Cub Scouts in September 2008, following the appointment of our new DC, Paul

Austin. Already a leader within the Sittingbourne and Milton District it is easy for me to see the ambition and drive in many of our leaders, whether they are new to Scouting or have been members for a very long time. With numbers of Cubs at a very acceptable level across the District the challenge is for us to retain the ones we have and to encourage other young people to come along as well. This means ensuring what we offer them is fun and exciting.

What was quite evident to me before I accepted the role was that our Cub Leaders had been following the same programme for a number of years and were ready for a change. As a result a new Cub Scout programme was created, using the Leaders own ideas as a basis. To ensure they remain engaged and to make sure I would monopolise on their collective skills, I organised a brainstorming session to establish what they thought our Cub Scouts would like to do as District activities. The output from this was the District Cub Scout Programme distributed for the 2008 / 2009 season.

The schedule of activities for this programme is now underway and being followed. Activities organised for so far have included a Bonfire Bash at Bexon Lane in November and a Cooking competition for early March. Others include a Canoe taster session in May, a new type of District Cub camp, a Nature Day and a Swimming gala. All Cub Scout Leaders across the district are continually encouraged to let their Cubs know there is a wider Scouting world than their own Pack hut and offer these activities to them.

In order for our Cubs to prepare themselves for Scouts I have been working with my fellow ADC in the Scout section to arrange for our Sixers and Seconders from across the District to attend the District Scout Camp in May, either for the day or to camp with them. I believe it is vital for some cross sectional activities to be held, to dispel the myths and fears many youngsters have and demonstrate the fun they will have when they are there too.

Lastly I would like to thank each and every one of my Adult Leaders and helpers for the support they continually give to the District, but more importantly to the Cub Scouts in their care. Without them there would be no Cub Scout section."

Regards

Kevin Marshall
ADC Cubs.



Scout Section Annual Report 2009

Two new Scout sections have started up in the last year, at 1st Iwade and 1st Milton Regis, thus providing scouting training and adventure for the young people who have enjoyed membership of the Beaver and Cub sections in these Groups. In fact both groups have held camps at Bexon Lane in April.

The Master-at-Arms course held for the District resulted in 32 Scouts attending 3 of the 4 available sessions and obtaining the badge for rifle shooting and archery. Some of the Scouts who were only able to attend less sessions have since completed the badge elsewhere.

A successful leaders' camp was held in June, run by the Explorer section.

A district bike ride, organised by the DC, was also held in June.

Scouts who had gained the Chief Scout's Gold Award attended the presentations held at Margate and Chatham Dockyard.

A district contingent of 38 young people and leaders from three troops attended the Essex International Jamboree 2008 at Kirby-Le-Soken, on the Orangutan sub-camp (appropriately for some of the leaders) enjoying a whole range of activities together with about 6,000 other Scouts from around the world.

Scouts participated in JOTA/JOTI in October and there was a good turnout for the Remembrance Parade in November.

A District Christmas Party was held in December, as was the district Carol Service.

This year there have been a Bike or Hike overnight camp and an Easter Egg Hunt.

Several leaders have received long service awards in the last year, including two 30-year awards.

Leaders continue to have plans for varied activities for their troops, as they did last year.

Kevin Grimshaw has agreed to take on the role of ADC (Scouts) and has planned district events for the coming year, starting with the District Scout camp at Bexon at the end of May.

Two troops will be attending the Kent International Jamboree in July-August and other district leaders will be attending as Jamboree Staff.

With our thanks to all the Scout Section Leaders, The District Executive and The District Team.

Chris Appleby / Kevin Grimshaw
ADC (Scouts) (Retired) / ADC (Scouts)

Explorer Report



Just been looking at our programmes to see what we've been up to in the last year. Of course our highlight was our hugely successful trip to Kandersteg with 5th Sittingbourne Scouts. We all had a terrific time scaling to greater heights than ever before, fantastic sights and of course good company. Watch this space for the next big one – possibly will be brought forward to 2011 – who knows where – open to suggestions.

We held several smaller weekend unit camps and several Explorers organised camps and walking weekends utilising the Passport scheme. There was a good turn out for winter survival with two teams doing very well. We also had a team going in for Triangle Overnight Hike in Ashdown forest who were very successful and came 8th out of 20 teams but with only a few points of the leaders.

We had 9 month trial period with Water Dragons & Land Dragons. The Land Dragons had only three members and folded quite quickly. The Water Dragons were more successful with many of our regulars from a Thursday night attending regularly. With a change of Leaders it was realised that only one Explorer was attending Teynham exclusively so it closed at the end of the year. Tracey runs the Young Leaders section and is the D of E advisor for the unit. Kerry has moved on to Beavers with Murston & Bapchild and everyone else has remained with the main unit.

In June we ran a District Leaders Training Weekend which was hugely successful with about 30 leaders attending and a lot was learnt with plenty of fun. We aim to have another one as soon as we can fit it in our busy schedule. We had our second Patrol Camp for

older Scouts which was enjoyed by all. It is good time to give an introduction to the Scouts to the kinds of activities that they might expect from the Unit and allows them to get to know and mix with the existing Explorers. We also run a Leaders Canoe day which was successful and a good lunch – hopefully to run again in the autumn.

Our annual day out found us at Tree Jumpers again, it challenges us in various ways although enjoyable we are looking for new adventures this year.

We have booked 2 days of Power Kiting with the new County equipment and instructors and are looking forward to it with some excitement

Yours in Scouting
District Explorer Team

Network report.



This year members of the Network have worked closely with a number of groups where many of them are leaders.

We have worked closely on building the relationship with the County network team and hope to do more in the future.

It is hoped that now we have a core team of Networkers we will be arranging an active programme of events.

Campsite Report May 2009

It only seems like yesterday Tracey was hassling me for a campsite report. Well a year has passed and now it's Paul chasing me!

As I reported last year the numbers of visitors from outside the district has grown year on year and 2008 saw our largest amount of visitors and our largest income to date. 2009 was late too start and we had problems with groups not being able to get through on the phone. However it is picking up now and the diary is beginning to look full again. We have again had return booking from Scout groups in Kent and South London including Medway, Sydenham, Whitstable and Dartford, who have returned for the 5th consecutive year. And they have already booked for 2010. We are also taking bookings from schools and youth groups and the ever supportive Duke of Edinburgh teams.

As usual the District exec has been very supportive with all the projects we have undertaken over the last year. Including the replacement of our 40 year old tractor, with a more user friendly, compact tractor and finishing mower. This will allow for faster grass cutting and a top quality finish. Thanks to our two grass cutters, Stuart and Colin The grass is the best it has been. Thanks to you two guys.

EDF again did us proud when they came and decorated the inside of the building, a job well done.

We are still working through our seemingly endless list of jobs. And we are starting a regular maintenance plan. Some new barriers and fences have been erected to make us more secure. However this did not stop a break in to the store with the loss of £ 2000 of kit, all of which has been replaced. This loss did, however, make us more aware of our insurance responsibilities and prompt a review.

We need your help.

We have achieved an enormous amount in the last 7 years and I still want to move forward. If you feel you could get involved I have a list of projects both big and small around the site that we would like to encourage groups, sections or individuals to take on. The service crew meet on 2ND Sunday each month. And when required.

We are looking for a plumber and a tiller at the moment, any takers?

If you have any ideas or feel you can help please give me a call. We are currently looking at ways we can use part of the wooded area after a group made a suggestion.

Finally a big thank you to the Duty Wardens, and everyone that has helped at the site over the last year, and everyone that uses it

Remember it's Your Campsite!

Paul

Paul Dickens
ADC Campsite

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