



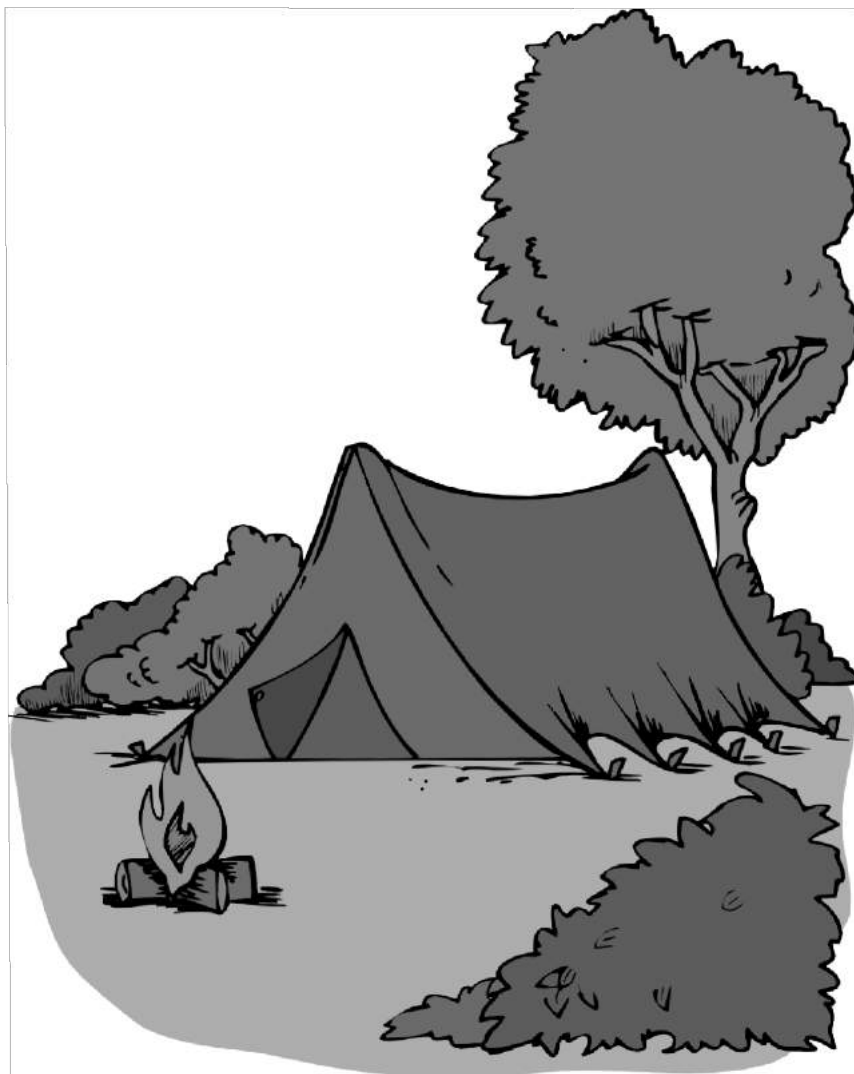
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Scouts

Woodsmoke



www.abbotslanglescouts.org.uk

94th AGM – 17th May 2021

Chairman's Report

Welcome to the 94th 1st Abbots Langley, 3rd North Watford Scouts Annual General Meeting. I would especially like to welcome our District Commissioner, Dave Collette, here in person, and other District Representatives joining us virtually, along with Councillor Fran Deschampsneufs, the Vice Chair of Abbots Langley Parish Council. You are all most welcome.

I would like to begin this evening with a short prayer. Richard Gabriel has kindly offered to read it on behalf of Revd Peter Waddell, who unfortunately couldn't attend this evening. Thank you.

At our last AGM in October it was hoped that we would all be able to meet together once again by now, but alas, we find ourselves behind screens once again. With the pandemic showing signs of retreat and a very successful vaccination programme, life looks like getting back to some sort of normality soon.

The Covid lockdowns had a severe impact on our fundraising in 2020, with only the Christmas Post and a virtual quiz able to take place and raise much needed funds. My thanks go to Pauline and Dani for taking the lead on these two initiatives.

We were very fortunate to qualify for various grants from our local councils which totalled £18,000 over fifteen months. This kept our Scout Group going in the absence of any fundraising during this time. Given the uncertainty of what future fundraising will take place, the grants have been a much welcomed and essential life-line. My thanks must go to Pauline who spent hours and hours filling out grant request forms and of course the local councils for their support packages.

Although all of our Group events were cancelled during the year, I am full of admiration for all of our leaders, assistant leaders and helpers who managed to keep their section meetings going via Zoom, coming up with imaginative programmes throughout the year. You are all a credit to your Scout Group and the community in which we live.

During 2020, a sub-committee was formed to deliver the climbing wall package in memory of our Group Scout Leader, Clive Winder. I am pleased to say that this has now achieved its goal and the wall is to be constructed over the summer. It is hoped that 'The Winder Wall' will provide hours of fun, challenges and excitement for many generations of Beavers, Cubs and Scouts to come, something Clive would have been very proud of I'm sure. It is hoped that an official opening ceremony will take place at HQ on Saturday, September 4th 2021. A commemorative book recording Clive's Scouting life has also been produced, which we hope will be available to view at this time.

As mentioned previously, the Group has been restructuring the Executive Committee over the last twelve months, to bring us in line with Scout Association Guidelines. I would like to thank the outgoing Committee for their support and hard work during the past, very challenging, year. Thank you to Phil Clarke, Jo Watts, John Gomme and Elaine Nottage, who are all, stepping down. Rachel Drake, who has been a trustee since 2004 is also leaving the Executive Committee but I am happy to say, is continuing to help at Beavers. I appreciate all of their contributions to the Group over the years.

The challenges we have faced this year have been tremendous and I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the District for their support and to four Group members whose tireless commitment and enthusiasm has enabled us to weather the storm. Cate, Iain, Pauline and Richard – I couldn't have done it without you!

I would also like to say a very special thank-you to my wife, Aisling, who has supported and assisted me, not only over this past very difficult 15 months, but for the 10 years as Chairman. Aisling has been so patient and understanding during the hours and hours of meetings and paperwork that has had to be done to see us through this very difficult time. Thanks Ais.

After 40 years as an Executive Committee member, Lin Lythaby has decided to stand down. Lin's input into Scouting has been immeasurable, and it has been an honour to work alongside Lyn at the many fundraisers she has overseen over the years. Lin must have helped raise in excess of £120,000 during that time, which is truly remarkable to say the least! On behalf of the Group and all the young people whom you have helped along their Scouting adventure...thank you, Lin. I am delighted to announce that Lin is to be nominated as our new Honorary Group President, a role which I hope she will accept.

This will be my last AGM as Group Chairman. I could say the last 10 years have flown by, but actually the 25 years I have been involved have flown even faster! My time with 1st Abbots Langley began back in 1996 when my eldest son joined as a Beaver and I soon became a regular helper - not surprisingly mostly when DIY was on the programme! Two sons later and I had gone beyond the point of no return – camps, competitions, wide games, narrowboat, more DIY and, of course, the Committee. I can honestly say that I have genuinely loved it – the teamwork, being with the youngsters and the adults and most of all, it often involves the great outdoors. The time has come to move on and hand over. I wish Richard Gabriel the very best of luck in his new role as Chairman as he moves the Group forward once more so that we can deliver skills for life to our young people in Abbots Langley and beyond. Thank you.



Rachel receiving flowers as thanks for her time as a trustee



Edwin receiving his Chief Scout's 40 years service award



Lin receiving her flowers on leaving as trustee after 40 years and taking on her role of President



Mike's gifts on retiring as Chairman

Michael Benson
Chairman

94th AGM – 17th May 2021

District Commissioner's Report

Thank you to the group in supporting the District. It's always gratifying when you are at an event and see the Yellow Neckers of the 3rd NW, 1st Abbots Langley.

Thank you for being an important part of the community of Abbots Langley especially the loan of your building for community use. It is used not just for Scouting; we are also here for local people. It's been very encouraging to see pictures online of the sections, home in the building and out doing stuff. It must be comforting for local people to see we are still here and very, very active.

Many, many thanks to everyone for getting your census numbers completed on time this year. Youth numbers are down by 144 (from 663 to 519) -22%. Adult numbers are down by 15 (219-204) -7%. Overall we are down 159 (882-723) -18%. Official figures have not been released but we think we are better than the County, and national figures of around 22%.

We are still very beholding to Government as to what we can and cannot do which is making planning difficult. Gilwell has produced excellent factsheets to help with the type of activities Groups can be running. Please keep monitoring the main TSA website, watching your email box for communications from HQ and try to login and watch any webinars or online meetings. They are all great sources of help.

In the meantime, please all share your best socially distanced programme ideas for, and with, your young people so we all have some preparation as face-to-face Scouting resumes.

2020 / 2021 is going to be a difficult financial one for all charities and some will not survive the current crisis. Before the lockdown we were warned by HQ of capitation increases in 2021, this was pre Covid and due to a huge increase in safeguarding, safety, governance and compliance costs.

Finally, can we please ask all adults, executive committee members, ASU Leaders, those who are and want to remain members of Scouting to complete their mandatory training. It's something we ask of all our adults in key positions. Some committees across our District have taken more persuasion! It is something you can do in the comfort of your home, if you have a computer, with a glass of your favourite tippie by your side! We will however be running short courses for those who cannot manage new technology.

Scouting is in a lot better shape than most charities and will survive this pandemic, albeit in a different way. The ingenuity and effort of all our leaders continues to astound me, with online treasure hunts, craft, cooking. Scouting is even more important at these times helping to reduce the stress in our young people's lives by improving their mental health and giving them skills for life.

Thank you to everyone in the Executive Committee, the Beaver Colony, Cub Pack, Scout Troop, Explorer Unit and ASU for your continued help and support for our young people.

Dave Collette
District Commissioner

94th AGM – 17th May 2021

Group Scout Leader's Report

As yet nobody has come forward to take on the role of Group Scout Leader so it falls to me to temporarily fill this role. If there is anyone who wishes to take on this very fulfilling and richly rewarding role please contact me or anyone in the Group. There is a full role description available, training is given and help is always in hand. You will not be left alone.

Thanks to the incredible hard work and remarkable ingenuity of our leader teams our young people have been able to continue with their Scouting programmes and have continued to earn their badges. All sections have met online via zoom, back face to face (briefly), back on zoom and now back face to face again! The census return for 2021 reported that the total number of young people in the Group was 110 down from 115 in 2020. An incredibly low loss of 4% when the national average is more like 24%.

Beavers had 7 Bronze awards given out during the past year, Dani is proud of their online attendance with a 97% attendance for autumn 2020 and spring 2021.

Chris and the **Rainforest Cubs** currently have 20 young people, down from 27 last year, with female youth members making up nearly half of the pack. Nicky Trotman has moved over to support Jungle Cubs as an Assistant Section Leader, and we'd like to wish Nicky all the best with this. There is New Section Assistant, Richard King and a new Accounts Administrator Laura Fitzpatrick. The Pack also continues to benefit from the assistance of Explorers as part of their Duke of Edinburgh work. The virtual meetings on zoom were all well attended, providing Cubs with some much needed structure and variety of new activities during the prolonged periods indoors.

Some of our more notable and exciting undertaking of the past few months both virtually and face to face included: virtual Halloween party, backwoods cooking, virtual games evening, Italian evening with pizza making, virtual challenge evening, virtual Christmas party, Essex Reptile Encounters, Chinese New Year, pancake night, gardener badge evening, Easter craft and cooking. Since lockdown has eased a Leavesden Country Park hike, some tent pitching and wide games.

Cubs have throughout their programme of virtual and physical activities have been able to complete a host of badge work and awards including: animal carer activity badge, backwoods cooking activity badge, chef's activity badge and gardener activity badge. Individual Cubs too have used the time indoors during the lockdowns to undertake the completion of badges and awards around their own personal interests and hobbies including: cyclist activity badge, digital citizens staged activity badge and equestrian activity badge. There was also one Cub who completed their Silver Chief Scout Award last term, and our congratulations go to Ben Rayner.

Richard and the **Jungle Cubs** had lots of fun (particularly doing scavenger hunts on zoom!), learned some new skills (pitching tents at Lees Wood) and completed plenty of badges in the process, including chef, gardener, naturalist, navigator, local knowledge and have worked towards some challenge awards too.

A few special thank yous - firstly, to Nicky Trotman who joined Jungle Cubs as a leader at the beginning of the year - we literally couldn't have carried on without her help and support! And to one of our Young Leaders, Andrew Grant, who has helped week in week out. One particular week, Andrew planned, prepared and led parts of our Chinese New Year virtual meeting - this included writing every cub's name out in Chinese for them to copy - WOW! Andrew went above and beyond, an amazing effort!

Amaelia reports that the **Scout** numbers have increased to 52 young members. Online meetings ranged from bingo and scavenger hunts, to building the tallest tower out of marshmallows! Most recently with the help of parents at home, they were able to complete their mechanics badge among many other badges including DIY, photography, emergency aid and chef badge, with the leaders creating fun interactive videos for the Scouts to join in with at home.

Even though Scouting hasn't been "normal" this year, many badges have still been attained by all since May 2020 (240 badges to be exact!). This includes 5 Gold Chief Scout awards - this is the highest achievable badge in Scouts, and takes many hours of work, time and dedication to complete.

Scouts had hoped to embark on their Annual Summer Scout Camp last year, but this wasn't possible, and they had to unfortunately cancel it. Some of the leaders came together to create a week long virtual camp, which was enjoyed by over 20 members. The leaders worked very hard to create activities such as route planning, flag making and even virtual campfires! The week was enjoyed by all participants, and we are told some parents.

Looking at the age range of the Troop, and that of the 2 Cub packs that feed it, it is highly likely that the Group will have 60 Scouts on its books come next September. This might seem a nice problem, but it cannot happen. We cannot run an active evening with 60 young people and leaders in the building at one time. We are looking at this and one solution could be the creation of a second troop. But as with the other sections we need more adult leaders, without them young people may not enjoy the adventure that is Scouting.

Explorers were a difficult age to get to meet online and when they did they just wanted to talk. They have met online though and have kept in touch and as we have heard they have all helped the younger sections run their meetings. As they return their numbers are around 25 and they are planning their Duke of Edinburgh expeditions to start once they are allowed to camp.

With the current easing of lockdown measures we have once again been able to meet face-to-face in the Summer Term, an opportunity we are making the most of planning to be outdoors for the duration. Being outdoors once again and sharing experiences with friends is something that all our young people and leaders are thoroughly enjoying. Evenings and Saturday mornings are planned at Lees Wood and Phasels Wood over the rest of the term making use of the onsite activities, providing them the ability to obtain an extensive range of unique badges while undertaking new and exciting activities, adventures and experiences.

Overall, adult membership last year was down by 14 from 71 to 57. This was partly due to some adults leaving and some, to fulfil their roles, needed not be full members of TSA. At this point I would like to acknowledge executive committee officers, the team of people here this evening who have kept the Group on track and kept things running; Mike, Pauline, Cate, Richard and Iain (at home). Thank you all for steering the Group forward and making some pretty radical, positive changes as to how it will be run in the future.

They have done some fantastic stuff and the Group would not be in the strong position it is now in without their due diligence and governance. As always our sincere thanks go to all our leaders and group members for their continued support throughout the year for delivering such a varied programme for the Scouts to enjoy.

Dave Collette
District Commissioner

The Clive Winder Climbing Wall

I am very pleased, as one of my first acts as the new Chairperson of the Scout Group, to be able to announce that by the time of publication of this edition of Woodsmoke the Group Executive will have placed an order with King Kong Climbing Walls to provide us with a fantastic indoor climbing wall. This significant step towards achieving our goal has been made possible by the proceeds from the Group's Christmas Mail fundraising initiative and by the receipt of several local council and other grants, generous donations provided by family and friends of members of the Group and from individuals from the local community. On behalf of the Group, I wish to thank all those who have contributed to the project.

The climbing wall, an exciting addition to our HQ building, is to be dedicated to the late Clive Winder, our former GSL who very sadly succumbed to the covid-19 virus last year. Clive was very keen on encouraging our young people across all sections in the Group to broaden their horizons by learning new skills and to motivate self-confidence. The regular use of the climbing wall by all members of the Group, the young and perhaps even the not so young, will be a lasting tribute to dear Clive. A plaque or similar, engraved with Clive's name will be positioned next to the climbing wall. Please come forward with any personal ideas on how you think this should look. A provisional date of 4th September has been identified for the Scout Group to host an official opening ceremony. Sally Winder, together with members of her family, has kindly agreed to "open" the climbing wall in front of guests and, hopefully with some press coverage. Then, later the same day, other interested parties will have the opportunity to view the climbing wall.

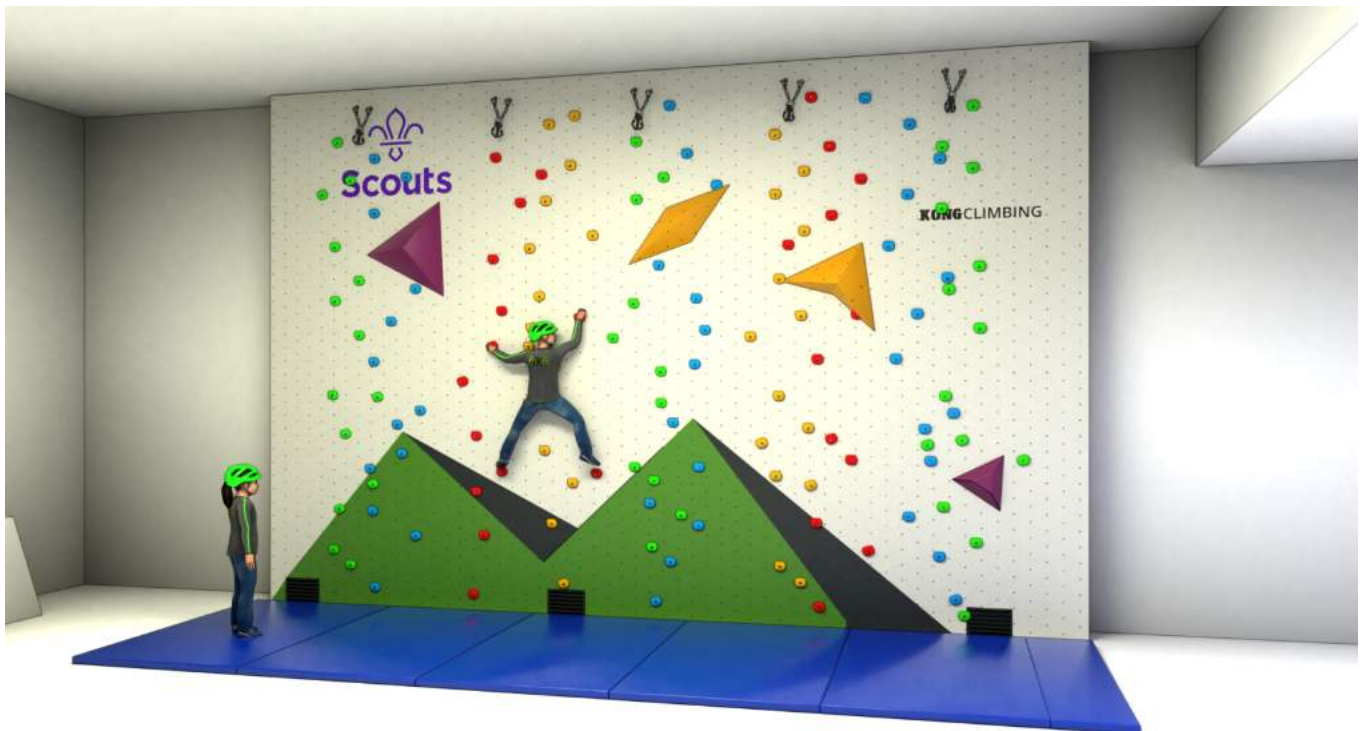


Illustration Courtesy of King Kong Climbing Walls

The illustration above is an indication of how the climbing wall will look. It will have the capacity of operating up to 5 rope lines with 2 climbing routes per line. The climbing routes can be re-set from time to time to vary the climbing experience and alter the degree of climbing skills required. The wall can also be used for traversing but this will be restricted to the bottom 2 metres only.

Construction of the wall is due to commence around the last week of July with the wall available for use during August primarily for training purposes. The climbing wall will predominantly be for the use of members of our Scout Group but we hope, in time, to make it available for wider use including other local Scout Groups, schools and other community groups.

For the climbing wall to be used to its full potential it is essential that our Scout Group can call upon a reasonable number of adequately qualified individuals to instruct and to oversee the users of the wall. We shall need individuals to volunteer to become involved from an early stage either as already fully trained instructors or who are willing to undergo the necessary training to act as climbing supervisors. If you are interested in becoming involved in the running of the Clive Winder Climbing Wall or perhaps you think you may know someone else who might be then do please contact me in the first instance: Chair@abbotslangleyscouts.org.uk

Opportunities will exist for sponsoring certain elements of the wall. So, if you like the idea of say, having a climbing line named after your son or daughter, then providing sponsorship might be of interest to you. Further details concerning providing sponsorship will be announced in due course.

I wish to thank the members of the small team from the Group Executive and the friends of the Group who have worked on this project, especially Colin Skuse and Tom Wright for their specialist climbing input. I must also express special thanks to Pauline Styles, the Group's Treasurer who has been instrumental in bringing the initial idea of a climbing wall to fruition.

Richard Gabriel
Scout Group Chairperson

Lake



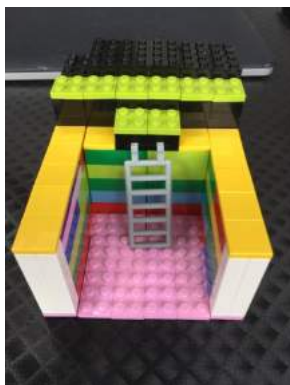
Lake Beavers were online for the spring term, but we still managed to pack in the badge work! There was a session on emergency aid where the Beavers talked about how to call the emergency services and to look after someone who has an injury. We also made great use of the microwaves by making mug pizza and mug cakes – both dishes contributing towards the cooking badge.

Junk modelling virtually was certainly a challenge – the Beavers all planned their inventions and were proud to show us their efforts at the end of the session. There were some great ideas, well done Beavers! The leaders were glad to not have to clean up after that one!



We worked throughout the term on the Skills Challenge award – we made salt dough superheroes/villains, worked together to problem solve on the escape room adventure and had a virtual world trip where the Beavers had to find out 3 facts about popular landmarks around the world. There was also a whole session for the Beavers to show us their practical skills like tying shoelaces, lighting a candle (with parent supervision!) and how they can make their beds/tidy their bedrooms.

Our final session of term was with the Lego man – who encouraged the Beavers to use their imagination and use Lego to create their ideas. It was great to see such fantastic constructions. We are looking forward to a term where we can see each other face to face and get outdoors!



Dani Chalk
Lake Beavers

River



Beavers are back! After meeting face to face for a few weeks at the end of last year, beavers spent the spring term back on zoom. Even though we couldn't be together, we still had lots of fun. Helen and Dani arranged all sorts of fun activities for us to do remotely, and we worked hard towards all our badges too.



In January, we worked on our cooking badge. We made microwave pizzas for our savoury dish, and then microwave mug cakes as our sweet. They might not have looked very appetising, but the Beavers assured us they tasted amazing!

As part of our collector badge, we collected coins from the year we were born to make a special Beaver shield! We also had a go at a virtual escape room, invented machines using junk modelling and remotely met with bricktopia, who led us on a Lego journey of imagination!



Fortunately, this term we are back face to face and have already had so much fun! Helen showed us five incredible science experiments where we made lava lamps, explosions, and even bigger explosions!!!

We have been learning how to read maps and enjoyed visiting Lees Wood and seeing all the bluebells. Now things are opening up, we have lots of exciting trips planned and can't wait to explore Leavesden Country Park, and ride the Cresta Run at Phasels Wood.



Hollie Goodman and Helen Welch
River Beavers

Rainforest

cubs

I had fun making our own pancakes on Zoom, we got to see everyone's unique ideas. I made a chocolate and banana one, I think it was the best!

I loved the Harry Potter book night because we got to dress up and read a bit of our favourite parts in the books.

One of my favourite evenings was 'meet our pet day,' because we got to listen to everyone's pets and even see them.

The gardening was exciting, as we had a special seed delivery to each of our doors and we got to plant them together on Zoom. We had to wait to find out what would happen to them in a few days, I learnt all about the Nasturtium plant and that it is a really nice type of flower.

Easter arts and craft was fun we got to make bunny's and delicious chocolate rice crispy cakes. Also another special delivery from Chris, a lot of chocolate!
(Thank you Chris).

On the country park hike it was really amazing to get to see everyone face to face. We had a compass and a map and somehow we figured our way around the county park together. I also got to catch up with my friend Esme, we spoke a lot about horses! It was so much fun!!

The following week's we pitched tents in teams, the other team got their tent up before we even got ours out of the bag! Then we went on a bicycle ride around the country park. Fortunately, the weather has warmed up and we had lots of fun in the sun!



SCOUTS

On the 22nd April 2021 we returned to proper scouting with a glorious reunion in Lees Wood. The fact we were only half a pack and had facemasks on was still wonderful in my eyes – Lockdown was finally lifting!

When Clive, our beloved Scout leader, died from Covid last year, we all knew that scouting would never be the same without him. The changes, however, were more than I could have foreseen, and along with our school changes, we began online scouting.

We received our own individual activity packs, delivered to our door no less, by our hard-working leaders. It was exciting to read the plan of what we'd be doing. They even contained sweets! (red liquorice shoelaces for knots, dolly mixture for Christingle, marshmallows for building...)

The first Zoom meeting was at the end of the Summer. It seems ages ago. It was great being able to see everyone again, especially our patient leaders. It felt safe and familiar even though it was completely new to us. I was so happy to see my old friends again as well as the younger members.

The whole family would look forward to the Thursday evening zoom meeting – after all it was a distraction from the boredom of isolation, having to have finished tea by a certain time, make sure we knew the passcode and of course check the computer was free (and we knew where the charger was). Of course nobody stayed in the kitchen once our activities started. I later found out they had started watching a box set!

The meetings were able to capture all the excitement of the newer, younger members and it made me feel quite grown up. At first we all had our cameras turned on but then bit by bit my friends stopped putting their pictures on. Too cool for school us oldies. I could hear the fun everywhere though.

Some of the activities were really great and the leaders were very knowledgeable. From delicious recipes to origami and even how a car works. I learned something new every session. My favourite activity though has to be the pancake tossing competition – thanks goodness we were all in our own kitchens otherwise there would have been a fair few heads bumping together. I think I managed about 50 – William, the winner was nearer 100 – and all on film!

So lockdown restrictions lifted and hooray – back to being able to see people again. Lees Wood had been closed throughout lockdown so to finally be back there was amazing.

Thank you so much to all our wonderful leaders, Amaelia, Toby, Charlotte, Lucy and Tony. Clive would have been very proud of you and I think us.

Nye Farrington

SCOUTS

On the first week back, we went to Lees Wood where we all met each other, which was nice as we had all been stuck in our houses for so long over the pandemic, so it was a great feeling being back outside with friends and having a bit of a laugh. We also made our own fire puts in a group of three (James, Nye and me) which we then used to cook marshmallows on, that ended up being a little burnt, but I still ate mine, as a few seconds later it would have been robbed by the floor.

On the second time we met, we once again met outside, but this time to Phasels Woods, where after map reading and working towards our Local Knowledge badge, we had a wide game (I can't remember the name of it) but the teams had to find puzzle pieces all over the woods and then bits of string. The string we then had to tie altogether to make the longest piece in competition with the other groups. Our team managed to make the biggest line!

Finally, we went on a nice walk, on a Scavenger Hunt to find lots of things from A-Z such as specific plants, cars etc. This was another good thing for me to get out and enjoy a good walk, as I haven't been on a proper walk for about a year now. Even better we got some chips to finish off the evening.



Diary Dates

July

19	Executive Meeting	Exec Committee
20	Ladies Guild Meeting – 2pm – TBC	Ladies Guild

August

17	Ladies Guild Meeting – 2pm – TBC	Ladies Guild
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September

4	Clive Winder Wall Opening Ceremony - TBC	All
4-5	Scout Camp – TBC	Scouts
20	Executive Meeting	Exec Committee
21	Ladies Guild Meeting – 2pm – TBC	Ladies Guild

October

19	Ladies Guild Meeting – 2pm – TBC	Ladies Guild
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November

15	Executive Meeting	Exec Committee
16	Ladies Guild Meeting – 2pm – TBC	Ladies Guild

Hall Happenings

Monday	6.15pm – 7.45pm	Cub Scouts – Jungle
Tuesday	5.30pm – 7.00pm	Beaver Scouts – River
	7.30pm – 9.30pm	Abbo's Explorer Scouts
	2.00pm – 4.30pm	Ladies Guild (3 rd in month)
Wednesday	6.30pm – 8.00pm	Cub Scouts – Rainforest
Thursday	7.30pm – 9.30pm	Scouts
Friday	8.00pm	Active Support (1 st in month)
Saturday	10.30am – 12.00pm	Beaver Scouts - Lake

Anna Ebden
Woodsmoke Editor

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Deadline for next issue – 8th October 2021

Woodsmoke is online to view and print at:
www.abbotslangleyscouts.org.uk

#YouShape



Scouts

**1st Abbots Langley
(3rd North Watford)**

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