

gscouts

**News and Views for Scouting in Gloucestershire
January 2018**



Ian Kirkham, Cotswold Vale, with a few of the 60 capsizes, Croft Water Weekend, 2017





Badge Courses: Paddy Langham

paddydj.langham@btopenworld.com

County Administrator: Louise Little

admin@gloucestershire-scouts.org.uk

Monday to Friday 0930 am - 1.30 pm
01452 814256

County Public Relations Adviser: Cindy Fowler

media@gloucestershire-scouts.org.uk

Cranham Scout Centre:

info@scoutcentre.org.uk

1.00 pm-4.00 pm 01452 812309

H.Q. Information Centre

info.centre@scouts.org.uk

Monday to Friday 8.00 am—7.00 pm
0345 300 1818

Saturday 9.00 am –12 noon

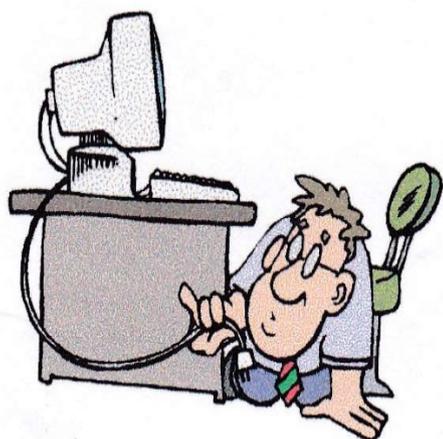
**If you want to print this magazine, it can
be presented in A4 or as an A5 booklet.**



January 2018

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Editorial

Following a little gentle persuasion, I am delighted with the flow of articles from all directions. This makes the magazine worthwhile and more interesting for everybody. Keep them coming! Copy date for the spring edition of **gscouts** will be April 9th.

See the magnificent range of courses and other activities the County has on offer — listed below.

Badge Courses

The County lays on numerous badge and training courses. Leaders may apply to attend any Scout or Explorer courses as a participant to learn the skills involved — e-mail badges@gloucestershire-scouts.org.uk if you are interested in this option.

Currently on offer are Young Leader Module A — Prepare for Take-off Expedition Challenge Weekends, CS Platinum Expedition Weekends (Explorers), Hillwalking Weekend, and Climbing, Geocaching, Electronics, Naturalist, Survival Skills, Bushcraft & Survival badge courses.

The team are keen to recruit new Leaders and Network members, particularly for Expedition, Survival Skills, Hillwalking and JOTI weekends.

Also available are NSRA YPS Air Rifle Instructor Course, Scout Paragliding Club, Discover Scuba Diving, PADI Open Water Scuba Diving Weekend, County Cooking Competition, Narrowboat Steerers' Course, RAF 100 Uniformed Organisations Stem Residential Course, Cotswold Marathon, Strategy, Evolution, and Parakiting Taster Day.

For details of all these contact Paddy Langham on badges@gloucestershire-scouts.org.uk

Why not register to receive his regular Badge Course News e-mails?



From the County Commissioner:

A whirlwind winter!!

So, I'm sat writing this short article and have taken one of those rare moments to reflect on what has been a very busy few months. It fills me with pride and shock that things have been so busy. This article is just a short run down of some of my highlights. If I haven't mentioned your event that I attended, please be sure it isn't because I didn't think it was a highlight, I just want to try and keep this short so you stand a chance of reading to the end!

BEAST. My first exposure to an event in Gloucestershire Scouts. And what an event! I only went along to see what was going on, but I couldn't leave! Seeing the Explorers all having fun, eating and boogieing (am I allowed to say that?) to the silent disco was great.

World Scout Jamboree. I won't say too much about this as the team have written an article to share more with you, but I was so pleased to be asked to come and support the selection event on one early morning in October. It meant getting up at 5:30am, but wow – it was worth it. My first task of the day was to support the leadership team in preparing and serving breakfast rolls to the 100+ participants that were hungry and ready to begin their day.

I then took part in carrying out judging and scoring of many of the bases and got to see what our County truly has to offer – amazing Young People! From building bridges to problem solving and caving to team work; watching everyone have such fun and working together was so much fun!

Thanks and well done to everyone involved!

Forest of Dean District Cooking Competition. I was asked to be a judge, and I didn't go hungry! We had a lot of fun and I really enjoyed watching the Scouts from different Troops across the District really getting on well and producing very high-quality dishes. There was drama, there was amazing food, but at the end of the day there could only be one winner!



I look forward to seeing how they fare against other Districts at the County Cooking competition in February.

Extreme ESU Awards evening. This is the first time I had the opportunity to be involved in presenting awards to Explorers. Extreme ESU invited Lauren (Youth Commissioer), Adam (DoE Advisor) and me to join Richard Winchup (DoE Ambassador) in present-



ing Bronze, Silver and Gold DoE Awards, some Platinum and Diamond Chief Scout's Awards and some Queen's Scout Awards. All in all, over 80 badges and awards were presented on the night and I want truly to congratulate every

young person who received one of those awards. Well done too to the leadership team for all their work in helping these young people achieve!

I've also had so many great conversations and meetings that are really making me think how good things already are. But, don't let me for one moment suggest that it has been easy. There have been tough and challenging times too, but in the main, I am very much enjoying my role as County Commissioner. Thank you to all of you for making me feel welcome!

Mark

Vision 2020 – the next steps

At our County AGM in September, I launched publicly what I am affectionately calling our 2020 Vision. It describes how I want to be a part of a County where:

Young People regularly influence and experience, high quality, balanced programmes, full of adventure, fun and development.

Adults feel supported, engaged and able to undertake their roles.

More Young People and Adults get to experience Scouting in Gloucestershire than ever before.

At the AGM, we invite everyone present to help shape some of the priorities for the County team by means of sticking dots on paper to help us understand what the main points or opportunities are to help make progress towards the vision.



If you want to be reminded of our County Vision, please go to:

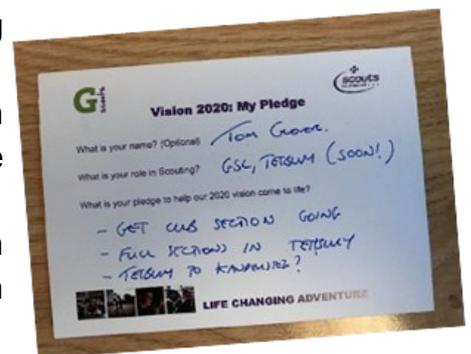
<http://gloucestershire-scouts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2020-Vision-28-Sep-17.pdf> to see the slides that I shared.

I was so very grateful to the 46 people who shared their pledges to help us move forward. Pledges received on the night included:

An Assistant Scout Leader: Increasing the number of Young People achieve their Chief Scout's Awards.

An Explorer Scout Leader: Involving Young People in programme planning to help deliver the best possible experiences.

A District Commissioner: Ensuring that young people can join Scouting in our County by doing everything they can to make sure all sections are running in every group.



I haven't listed all of them, but this level of personal commitment really made me feel proud to know that there is such a wonderful team, all committed to Scouting in Gloucestershire.

Also I was really pleased to receive a number of emails in the following days, where attendees had considered how they can support this and bring it to life. Thank you to you all.

The one thing that I can say about our ambitious vision is that if left to just my team and me, we will not come close. It is only through all of you across the County that we will achieve together, and I for one cannot wait to see the progress!

Mark

Building the team

You will have seen that we are still continuing to build the team to support you and will soon be letting you all know who we have recruited to support in ACC roles as part of the Programme and Activities teams. Look out for the updates in [gscouts](#). This month we have now started to look at the roles that will form part of the Adult Support team and we are looking to recruit a Safety Co-ordinator, an ACC (Inclusion) and a County Media and Communications Manager.

Additionally, following on from the amazing work that Tom Harding has been doing as County Training Manager, we are looking for someone who can continue this work, as Tom looks to step down from this role.

You may already know that in Stroud and Tetbury, Paul Trott has been in the role of Acting DC since May and we are so thankful for all that he has done in that District in his time. At the end of 2017, Paul stood down and I have now taken on the pleasure of acting as DC for the District while the DC search is going on. Once again a huge thank you to Paul for his support, commitment and time supporting this thriving District.

Liz Hodge is working with a team in Stroud & Tetbury to search for a DC Team that will support the District in moving forward. Recently Matt Dawson helped to secure some time on BBC Radio Gloucestershire, where he, a Beaver, a Cub, a Scout, an Explorer and our County Youth Commissioner were able to promote Scouting across Gloucestershire and the role of DC in Stroud & Tetbury. Radio stars in the making!!!



If you are interested in finding out about any of our vacancies, please visit our [volunteering opportunities website](#). Please do share these with others you may know who may be interested.

Mark

From the County Youth Commissioner:

February 2018 = #YouShape Month

2018 will be hosting the last #YouShape month in February! This has been a great success in years past but the hope is that Youth shaped Scouting is now interwoven into the weekly Scouting meetings and events that are put on for the young people, and, therefore, the need for such a token month is not required.

It would be great to hear about the things that you have planned for #YouShape month.



There is also a badge that the Young People can gain for their involvement in YouShape activities.

If you are unsure what Youth-shaped Scouting is, please either email your local District Youth Commissioner below, contact myself or find out more information at scouts.org.uk/youshape.

Kat Turner – Gloucester District - gloucesteryouthcommissioner@gmail.com

Holly Payne – Forest of Dean District - hpayne_dyc@yahoo.com

Jordan Randall – Cheltenham District - dyc@cheltenham-scouts.org.uk

Alex Jenkins – Cotswold Vale District - alexandra.d.jenkins@hotmail.com

Josh Woodcroft – Tewkesbury District – josh.woodcroft@gmail.com

Lauren Greening – County Youth Commissioner – youth.commissioner@gloucestershire-scouts.org.uk.

Lauren

Explorer and Network Christmas Ball



This year's Explorer and Network Christmas Ball was held on the 25th November at Cadbury Hall in Frampton-on-Severn. The ball is an annual event for Explorers and Network members from across the County. Whilst the team worked their magic decorating the hall and ensuring that the event ran smoothly, Explorers from around the County were busy getting dressed up for this annual event.

This ball included a hog roast, pic n' mix, disco entertainment and a badge for your camp blanket! Our photographer also had the added bonus of being able to print out photos taken as a special memento.

The ball team would like to thank everyone for making this year's event a success. Keep your eyes peeled for information about next year!

Alex Hawkins

Preparing for the Jamboree

The 2019 World Scout Jamboree in West Virginia still feels a long way off, but then so does our weekend back in October on which we selected the 45 Scouts from across the County who will represent us on the Jamboree! In the following three months, the Jamboree Unit have been busy; we've started our fundraising, met as a whole unit for the first time and the members of the joint Unit have been up to Shropshire to meet their counterparts! Since selection we have been busy kick-starting our fundraising in supermarkets across the county. On top of bag-packing, the Christmas period has seen each of the Scouts undertaking their own festive fundraising including a group helping Santa with his sleigh in Dursley. Each of the Scouts has to fundraise £4000 to go on the Jamboree, so please support the Scouts in your District with their fundraising. We're always on the lookout for help (currently looking for raffle prizes), so if you think you might be of use then contact us via our



hello@glosjam.org.uk

As we're youth-led, we thought it would be better if you heard from the Scouts themselves, so here are Bethan and Esmé's experiences so far;

"So far on this long road to get to the jamboree I have experienced many things. To start off with, I've made some fantastic new friends, despite not knowing them for long, we have all become very close very quickly and I can't wait to spend the next year and a half with them. I have also started my fundraising by making chocolate houses and selling them around my village. I have also been taking part in multiple bag packs with the rest of the unit, this has really increased my confidence with talking to people and telling them about our trip. I am most looking forward to the hosted hospitality as I think it's an amazing opportunity to get to know people's culture. I'm also excited about overcoming some of my fears with my new-found friends. I think that meeting people from different countries is going to be absolutely amazing and I can't wait!"

Bethan, Stroud and Tetbury District

"So far the road to the World Scout Jamboree has been an action-packed adventure. From being selected to meeting and bonding with the unit and starting to fundraise together, it has been a fun journey, although we have a long way to go before we arrive in West Virginia in 2019! My favourite bit so far has been talking to members of the public about our adventure and listening to their Scouting memories of Jamborees and camps they attended. I am looking forward to what the Jamboree experience will entail and embracing every part of it before meeting other Scouts from all around the world!"

Esmé, Cotswold District



Not only have the Scouts and Explorers been busy, but all of the Leaders have attended their own training weekend in Stafford. We attended many workshops throughout the weekend and were given advice on how best to support our young people on this journey to ensure they are able to make the most of this fantastic opportunity. We were also given a bit more information about the Jamboree itself and now know that the members of the UK Contingent will be going on a big city experience in either New York or Washington before the Jamboree commences.

The Gloucestershire-Shropshire Unit had a weekend get together which was used for Unit bonding and designing their Unit identity. They took part in a variety of team-building games and hiked to the local Christmas lights switch-on. Despite missing the switch-on itself, they spontaneously sang Christmas carols in the street and met Santa. The big announcement from this weekend is that the joint unit now has a rather cheesy name and from now on will be known as *Double Blue!*

We'll soon be announcing the name of the Gloucestershire only Unit, so please follow our [facebook page](#) to find out what it is and also to watch the rest of our adventures in the build up to the Jamboree in 2019.

Alex Hawkins (with help from Matt Evans (Leader), Bethan Lewis and Esme Fluett (participants)).

At a Tyre Shop:

"Invite us to your next blowout."



The “BEAST of the Edge”, a County Explorer camp, took place between the 13th and 15th October. After a hectic camp set up at Conygres Scout Campsite, the Explorers started to arrive and pitch their tents. Shortly after, dinner was served and the evening entertainments began. This year’s entertainments included a series of games and a disco.

After an early wake-up call, the activities opened. This year’s activities included archery, inflatables, backwoods cooking, cardboard caving, and a YouShape forum, amongst other activities.



After a day full of activities and a short period of chill time, dinner was well deserved. The Explorers then gathered together to discover the plans for Saturday’s evening entertainment, which played host to a silent disco, where the Explorers danced (and sang) the night away.



Following a slightly later wake-up call, the Explorers were split into groups and set out to complete a range of activities including slack-lining, escape rooms and various transporting tasks. Following the completion of these tasks the Explorers gained a bag full of puzzle pieces. The groups then had to race to complete their puzzle! This task definitely brought out the competitive side in the Explorers.



Finally, it was time for the Explorers to pack up their bags and head home, some from further afield than others! The BEAST Team would like to thank all of those who helped to make the event a success. Keep your eyes peeled for details for next year!

The BEAST of the Edge!

Alex Hawkins

Admin. The BEAST Team.





GRUMPY OLD GITS

DAN BACKLAND FOR GRUMPY OLD GITS | © Little Church Mouse Ltd MMXVII

Scuba Report

The last full weekend in September saw one of the largest contingents in years descend on Vobster Quay in Somerset for a scuba advanced dive weekend. A relatively positive weather forecast made us optimistic that the dive centre would not be too busy. Oh dear! After a good evening's travel to our local base at 5/7 Wells Scout HQ, we joined the entry queue on the dive centre's drive at 8 am on the Saturday morning. The JCScuba instructors were also caught up in the queue, (just behind us) so that was OK. Because of the number of participants and the wide range of specialist qualifications being undertaken, the weekend required a lot of planning by the instructors to make sure we got them all in safely, with divers paired up by qualification they were attempting. Shore support in the form of leaders Derek and Neil were racing up and down the line between launch areas booking our Scout and Explorer divers in and out of the water and keeping the records accurate and the divers re-equipped with new air tanks as needed – but the day passed off well.

Saturday evening saw the by-now traditional walk into Wells to the Fish and Chip Restaurant for our dinner – the takeaway area was heaving but luckily the restaurant area wasn't, so we had an enjoyable couple of hours in town before the weary divers headed back for an early night! Sunday saw Vobster even more crowded than the Saturday with divers almost swimming in to each other underwater, there were that many down there. On the surface was just as bad with queues at the launch platforms. The instructors quickly re-jigged the way the dives operated taking our youngsters out of the long waits at the platforms and into dive areas not quite so frequented as others. By 2 pm all our divers had completed all their dives and were busy writing up their logs, before the journey back to Gloucestershire (and Wiltshire for our newest member). Overall the 11 divers who completed the weekend (2 were ill), we managed 13 qualifications (some take 1 day and some take 2 days to get) and 8 "tours" (dives for fun and relaxation).

Derek Newman

Discover Scuba Diving

The final *Discover Scuba Diving* of 2017 took place on Saturday 18th November at Sir Thomas Rich School in Gloucester. In a repeat of last year's event this was massively oversubscribed, resulting in three sessions being run and a waiting list still in existence. The event was complicated by a booking error at the sports centre, meaning we had to start (and therefore finish) much later than originally planned. Nevertheless each session resulted in a batch of enthused (and tired) Scouts and Explorers, who we hope to see go on in 2018 and join the 105 who have already qualified as scuba divers.

Croft Water Weekend 2017

Great to see more Leaders as well as Explorers and 13+ Scouts joined the 5th Water Weekend. This year achieved entries from each and every District.

Twelve British Canoeing 2* were gained, along with a mixture of twenty 1* and 25/30 Stage 1-3 Paddlesport Badges.

Well done Stewart Tedaldi, Gloucester, for organizing awards and assessing 1; Roger Gardner and Tracy Hughes, Forest of Dean, assessing 2*; Ian Kirkham our Cotswold Vale 5* Canoeist with SI Phil Dell-Smith;

Jon Dimon, Sharon English, Sandy Campbell, Cheltenham; Joy Turner, Gloucester; Andy Jones, Leicester; Mark Rogers, Paul Carver, Amy Jarvis, West Devon; and James H Churn, Cotswold Vale.

Let's not forget Richard Piper catering, Caro McIntosh admin and Andrew Butcher on shore.

Many of the Leaders below are working on gaining permits:

Will Earl, Chris Lodwig, Tewkesbury; Bev Piper, Bristol for Tewkesbury; Anna-Marie Hamvas and Lazlo Berdan, Cotswold Vale; Tim Pollard, West Devon; Molesey Moles & Woody Innsworth; Steven Lewis, David Matthews, Nigel Wachs, Cheltenham; Andy Elliott, Chris Patterson, Gloucester; Peter Tootell, Cotswold Vale.

CIA ESU Leaders from Stroud & Tetbury took to the water like fish.

Over 50 Scouts and Explorers took part, some for the second time either to improve or gain a higher award.

Well done everyone.

Shelley Wright



Suptquach Pirates
chasing
Tewkesbury DC





Shelley Wright & Bev Piper in Training, Leamington Spa to Stratford-upon-Avon, Summer 2017



Rob Green, Gloucester, 46th Permit Holder to be

Bell Boating

At last Bell Boats launched at 1st Fairford Scout Lake.

Cheltenham District held a Beaver Water Day & Cub Water Day this June.

The weekend had over 50 Beavers on Saturday, 80+ Cubs on Sunday, about 180 young people, including parents and Leaders.

Junior kayaks, canoes, bell boats, nature trails, origami, bubbles and giant ball shooting catapults.

A wonderful but very tiring weekend.

Let's see Gloucestershire Scouting have their own Bell Boats in 2018.

Shelley Wright

01242 581080/07733 200603

[Bob's Dinosaurs ESU](#)



Penny Dell-Smith Bell Boating with Cheltenham Beavers

County Canal Weekend

Seven of our younger Scouts joined Paddy, Sos & co on the County Canal weekend on narrow-boats on the Grand Union Canal just west of London. Once on board, we travelled north from Hillingdon in Middlesex up around Watford towards Hemel Hempstead and then back again on the Sunday. The countryside along the canals there is beautiful and with a lock every half a mile or so, there is plenty to keep everyone occupied. The Scouts had to plan the weekend's menu and on the Saturday morning, moored the boat outside a conveniently located Tesco's, while they went and bought all the food.

The weather was dull and a little drizzly on the Saturday morning, but the Sunday was one of those gloriously bright, sunny and warm autumn days that was just perfect for "messaging about on the water"! The Scouts got totally immersed in life on the canals and took it in turns to steer the boat and work the locks. They also got to help prepare all the meals and take it in turns to do the washing up. They all returned home full of their adventures and I'm happy to report that no one fell in!

Sos Smith, Swindon Village Scouts

Registering an interest in hillwalking training and assessment - if you are looking to take Scouting youth out into the hills and mountains and do not currently hold a permit, then we would like to hear from you. The County Mountain Activities Team are keen to put together an annual programme to meet your needs. If you are interested in hillwalking then we would like to know. We will also endeavour to keep you directly informed of the teams offerings.

For further details please contact Glenn Hemsley, County Mountain Activities Adviser. (glos.ma.team@gmail.com)

Parakiting Taster Day

If your Explorer Unit is interested in this activity then contact Ron Shell: aaa-glos@ntlworld.com

Philosematy (Badge collecting)

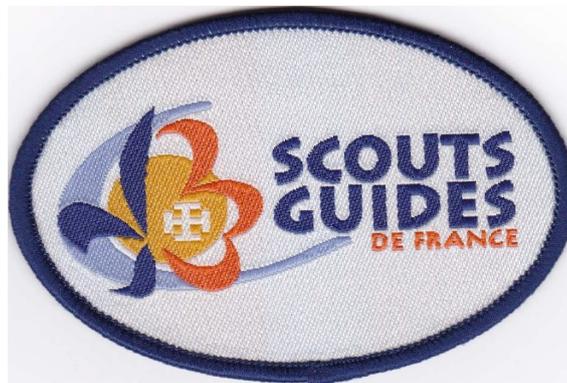
There will be a meeting of the International Badgers Club at Woodhouse Scout Camp near Almondsbury over the Easter weekend, March 30 to April 2. Thousands of badges for swop or sale. Non-members welcome.

I've just realised I haven't done the Hokey Cokey for ten years.

I suppose as you get older you forget what it's all about.

Scouting in France

The first Scout Troops in France, the Éclaireurs de France and the Éclaireurs Français were founded in 1911. The Guides, the Éclaireuses de France, followed in 1914. These interreligious organisations eventually merged in 1964. They presently have about 35000 members. Some Leaders left to form the Éclaireurs Neutres de France, with a more positive emphasis on religion.



In 1920, what is today the largest Scout association in France, the Scouts de France, was founded as a Roman Catholic organisation. They merged with the Guides de France (founded in 1923) in 2004 to form the Scouts et Guides de France. They have some 62000 youth members and 14000 Leaders in 924 Groups. Their equivalent of Gilwell is at the Chateau de Jambville, about 30 miles north-west of Paris. They are active in encouraging the rebirth of Scouting in Ukraine and Belarus and strengthening the Movement in French Polynesia. They are organised in "Territoires", which all have really attractive badges.

There is a separate association for Jewish Scouts, Les Éclaireuses et Éclaireurs Israélites de France, serving about 4000 members. Their organisation was dissolved by the Vichy Government in 1941 and many of the older members joined the Resistance. They helped to hide Jewish children until after the war. About 110 EIF Leaders were either killed in action or deported to concentration camps.



The first Troops of Unionist Scouts, a Protestant organisation open to all, was formed in 1911. They had 5874 members in 2016.



These four associations all belong to the World Scout Movement but there are also no less than 20 other Scout organisations that are not recognised. These include the Scouts de Fatima, the Association de Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Scout, the Éclaireurs de l'Évangile, Scouts Mormons, the Scouts Godefroy de Bouillon (one of the leaders of the first crusade), and the Scouts de Riaumont, which solely serve a community in the Pas de Calais for children with disabilities including autism.



Réseau d'Araignée
(Spider's Web)
Lone Scouts

Mountain Activities Weekend 2017

On Friday 22nd September, eight Scouts and Explorers, accompanied by three Leaders, headed off from Quedgeley Tesco in search of the Welsh Mountains. We made good time on the journey and a pit stop in Monmouth to refuel with Fish and Chips was appreciated by all. On arriving at Brecon Scout hut the task of unloading the bus of kit and setting up beds for the night was done with great efficiency. We were joined here by a further two Leaders and another Explorer (travelling from different parts of the country). After hot chocolate and biscuits, everyone snuggled down in their sleeping bags, eager for tomorrow to come.

The group were to be fuelled for the day's walking ahead with a full fry up, which went down really well. The group was then split down into two groups and kit checks were carried out. You never know what the hills will throw at you, so best be prepared for anything. We set off in the mini-bus, the foot of Pen-Y-Fan our destination.

Both groups would be heading up the highest peak in the Brecon Beacons National Park from the north. The weather forecast had been promising, but on arrival low cloud obscured our views and we hoped it would clear in time for the summit. Visibility was low and we were



hampered by strong winds, and alas our view from the top was of the inside of a cloud. None the less everyone was in high spirits and seemed to be enjoying the challenge. As we began to descend towards the saddle between Pen-Y-Fan and Cribyn the weather gods answered our prayers and the 360-degree views of the beautiful Welsh landscape began to emerge, as the clouds lifted, and on the summit of Cribyn these were enjoyed by all!! The greatest reward the mountains can give you for your efforts.



The group decided to descend Cribyn via the Bryn Teg ridge, before heading off path (via a river crossing) into Cwm Sere, and contouring around to Cefn Cwm National Trust Car Park and the refuge of the bus. An evening meal of Hunter's Chicken was cooked by the Leaders and was followed by home-made apple and blackberry pie. There was just time for a movie night (Swallows and Amazons) before bed.

Day two and it was bacon butties for breakfast, after which the Scout hut needed emptying and cleaning before we could set off on our final adventure. Today it was the turn of the youngsters to take over the navigation. Our aim today was to get the youngsters off path and practising their bearings, pacings and timings on the lower slopes of Fan-Y-Big. Again the weather was a little murky, but brightened as the day continued. The confidence the young people showed while out on the hills was impressive and they were very successful at reaching each of the check points set by the leadership team.



As we descended back towards the minibus after lunch, we had one last challenge/surprise for the young people: a chance to walk through an old disused railway tunnel. It was a short cut back to the bus through the hill, that would require torches and team work and would result in rather soggy feet. They all accepted the challenge and thoroughly enjoyed it, and we only had one end up on their bottom in the water. It was then time to change into our uniforms, eat our emergency rations (as they hadn't been needed) and head for home.



Lower slopes of
Fan Y Big



We were a little delayed getting home due to a closure on the M4 at Newport, but we did eventually return safe and sound and we hope that all the young people had as good a time as us Leaders.

Chloe Hall

Cotswold Vale District News

With the run up to Christmas I was proud to be presenting awards to Leaders across the District. The following awards were received for presentation.

Certificate for Bar to Silver Acorn to: David Carrington District Chair (he received his medal at the St George's Day parade at Windsor).;

Awards for Merit to : Stu Cook, 1st Cam, Adrian Mather, Slimbridge, Lisa Day, 1st Berkeley, Richard Arnold, 1st Wotton, and Chloe Hall, Meyer Explorers;

Bar to Award for Merit to: Raymond Harris, 1st Wotton, Marisa and Paul Dexter ,1st Wotton;

Chief Scouts Commendation for Good Service – Maggie Sweeting, 1st Dursley.

Wood Beads were presented to Choco Smith at Slimbridge and Keith Palmer, 1st Wotton;

20 years' service award to Adrian Mather, Slimbridge.

10 years' service award to Gill Mather, Slimbridge, and Chloe Hall, Meyer Explorers, Kevin and Lisa Taylor, 1st Cam;

5 years' service award to Dave Ashford, Sharpness;

40 years' service award to John Morton;

50 years' service award to Alan Bell.

Once again I attended the Slimbridge Scout Group Carol Service on 5th December. What a wonderful way to start the Christmas season! The young people, as always, led the service with Mary Tucker, the Community Chaplin, acting as the Master of Ceremonies! Well done to the Group for the wonderful readings and choice of carols!

Mulled wine and mince pies provided by the Executive were well received at the end of the service, with parents, Leaders and young people mingling together.

My thanks to Meyer Explorers for hosting a Christmas Party for the Scouts in the District, a wonderful way for the Scouts to integrate with the Explorers in a fun and exciting way.

Once again the District has had a great year with the young people being given opportunities to try new and exciting activities, whilst the Leaders too have worked well together, as Groups have integrated with each other to ensure as many young people as possible have been able to take up the opportunities and the burden of leading has been shared.

My thanks to all my Leaders, Section Assistants, Occasional Helpers and parents, without whom the programmes could not go ahead and the young people could not gain the experiences being made available to them.

I look forward to another exciting year ahead within the District and the opportunity to give out further awards to others.

Carole O'Donnell

DC Cotswold Vale



David Carrington, President, Cotswold Vale District, with his son, Nipper Mark, at Windsor on receipt of a Bar to his Silver Acorn



The Severn Bore

Our County sits astride one of the natural wonders of the world, but have we all taken the opportunity to see it? The Severn Bore is rated as the best in Europe; the largest of them all occurs on the Qiantang River in China (video on the Internet) and a famous one, with a tide only slightly higher than in the Severn estuary, can be seen in the Bay of Fundy behind Nova Scotia.

Spring tides (nothing to do with the season—the name derives from the term “to leap up high”) occur on two consecutive cycles twice a month, according to the position of either the Sun or the Moon. When these tides coincide with equinoxes (February—April and August—October), particularly high tides occur, which means generally that a spectacular bore can be forecast. They are rated with from one to five stars. When a tide height is expected to exceed 8 metres (26.2 feet) at Sharpness, it is likely to generate a bore. They always occur between 7 am and noon and between 7 pm and midnight.

If there has been recent rain in the north, the flow of “freshwater” in the narrow stretch below Minsterworth can produce a spectacular wave beating against the incoming tide and the strength of the bore can reverse the flow of the river. A most striking feature is that the headlong flow upriver, carrying with it debris, including large tree trunks, continues for a long time after the passage of the leading wave.

Good places to see the bore are Newnham, Framilode, Epney and Stonebench, but my favourite is Minsterworth. In all cases it is essential to arrive early, as the bore may pass sooner (or later) than forecast and there is always a crowd and consequent parking problems when a good bore is expected. Unfortunately you cannot guarantee to see a spectacular bore, even when one is forecast, so you may be disappointed, but there is always another time! Do not wander onto inviting sand banks when a bore is due, as it travels at around 10 mph — faster than you can run in front of it and many people have drowned trying to do just that!

Four-star bores are forecast on 2nd February and 3rd and 4th March (see the Internet for timings).

John Morton

gscouts

is edited by

John Morton

editor@gscouts.org.uk

01453 452159

Please send contributions, news

and pictures to:

magazine@gscouts.org.uk

For information visit

gscouts.org.uk or

phone the County Office

01452 812309