

Badge Course News

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Badge Courses Report 2019/2020

This year's report again takes the form of a number of articles adapted from our regular newsletters:

Scout Air Weekend

Scouts from six Troops enjoyed a weekend on the airfield at Croft Farm near Evesham. They camped for the weekend, learnt about aviation and aerial navigation and gained several related activity badges. Then they all had the chance to fly thanks to the pilots who took them up in their aircraft. The Scouts were then expected to navigate around a triangular route before returning to the airfield. They even had the chance to fly the plane themselves whilst in the air. Many thanks to the team for running the event and Black Pig ESU for doing the catering. Another weekend is booked for 2020. Places fill fast so contact [Ron Shell](#) if your Troop would like to go. (Note that applications are not open individual Scouts but to patrols of six.



Troops attending were:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Severnside	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chipping Campden
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rodborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Swindon Village
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 41st Cheltenham	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sevenhampton

PADI Advanced / Specialism Weekend



The PADI Advanced / Specialism weekend did not run as its usual residential weekend this year due to lack of numbers making it financially unviable. Instead, those divers who did register to further their skill sets have been catered for on alternative dive dates alongside other dive school activities. The first of these dates at a very wet Cromhall saw four intrepid teenagers arrive for their revised one-day session. One had come purely to refine his skills on an Experience Dive whilst the other three went for their Digital Underwater Photography qualification. Three very different cameras were used as the three lads gained their qualification.

Those attending were from:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rodborough 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 31st Gloucester 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 31st Gloucester 2	

Derek Newman Explorer Scout Leader, Octopus (Scuba) Unit & Cheltenham Wyell (Young Leader) Unit

Canal Weekend



Lock safety talk at Springwell Lock

This year's Canal Weekend proved to be a lot wetter than usual. Saturday saw many short showers which turned into torrential rain luckily after we had moored up for the night. Sunday was even wetter with several showers with bright periods in between. This did not prevent the Scouts from making a first-rate job of steering the boats and working the locks.

We had three boats this year due to the many Scouts who applied; Pisces, Merlin and Theo with a total of twenty-four Scouts and twelve leaders.

We arrived at the base at Harefield on Friday evening and were fitted with life jackets before boarding our boats. On Saturday morning we worked up through nineteen locks travelling about fourteen miles during the day. We stopped at Tesco's at Rickmansworth to buy food for the rest of the weekend – the Scouts had chosen the menu themselves. We arrived at Hemel Hempstead and winded (turned round) the boats and moored for the night. All the Scouts helped with the cooking and clearing up for meals. Then



on Sunday we worked all the way back again. Finally, having returned to the base at Harefield it was time to present the Scouts with their Power Coxswain badges before returning to Gloucestershire. A big thank you to the team of leaders and to the Scouts who worked so hard.

Those attending were from:

• 1 st Royal Forest 6	• 1 st Dursley 2
• 1 st Hatherley 1	• 45 th Gloucester 2
• 1 st Chipping Campden 5	• Churchdown 2
• 1 st Tetbury 1	• Swindon Village 2
• Adder's Tongue ESU 1	• Random ESU 1
• Innsworth 1	



Hereford & Worcester with Gloucestershire Scouts

2019 was once again a fully booked year for our Annual **Operation Bald Eagle Scout Camp**.

On Friday evening, over 500 Scouts and Leaders from all corners of Hereford & Worcester and Gloucestershire descended on Rhydd Covert

Campsite, and as soon as the tents were pitched the scouts raced to find and complete the

challenge for the **Friday Night Trophy**.

After a quick flag break, the Day Base Challenge started as the teams raced around the site to complete as many bases as possible, with activities ranging from go carting to bridge building, plus a lot of buckets of water! A late afternoon break gave just time for everyone to have a meal and get ready for the circular **Night Incident Hike**. A couple of coaches and a lot of communication saw all the teams and base staff in place, ready to all start at the same time.



Spider walk

Night bases included the ever popular Wall, provided and run as ever by Smurf and his

team from North Cotswold. Despite some rain, most teams completed the hike, and enjoyed a much needed lie-in on Sunday morning before campsites were packed away in time for flag down and the last excitement of the weekend – who had won the trophies?



Duck shoot

Congratulations to 2nd Twyning who came 3rd in Bald Eagle Overall and 2nd in the Night Team Challenge.

Gloucestershire Troops taking part were:

• Minchinhampton	• 2 nd Twyning
• Sevenhampton	• Slimbridge
• Selsley	• Swindon Village
• 1st Dursley	• Moreton in Marsh
• Wotton under Edge	• 1st Cam
• 41 st Cheltenham	

Chris Langham, on behalf of the OBE organising team

Hill Walking Weekend



The hill walking weekend was a 2 nights away trip to the Brecon Beacons sleeping in Brecon Scout Hut. This was luxury accommodation compared to camping in the saturated mud and drizzle outside.

Paul and Phil took us onto Pen Y Fan, the highest of the Brecon Beacons, at an altitude of 886 metres. The weather started well, as we

climbed south towards the summit. Once we had reached the peak, we met another Scout group,

who like us were using their group shelter for a quick lunch break on the top. We had an adventurous hike down the mountain, through poor visibility and sporadic rain. We were somewhat relieved once we reached the minibus, but well satisfied that we had shown we could survive the worst of the weather that the mountain could throw at us that day.

The following day, we drove to a picturesque valley, where we practised our map reading and compass skills. The highlight of the weekend came on our return trip, where we were led into a disused narrow-gauge railway tunnel that was once used to transport workers to the mountains. The tunnel itself was over 1 km long and the entrance was ankle deep in water. During our tunnel adventure, we felt like Indiana Jones in search of the Holy Grail. Once on the other side, we were picked up by the minibus where we could change out of our soaked shoes – something Indiana Jones never had to do.



Overall, this trip was great fun. It was great to be in the mountains and we learnt a lot about surviving there. We would like to thank Paul and Phil for organising the trip and Wendy for the excellent catering.

Dominic, Matthew, Nicola No Name ESU

Those attending were from:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31st Gloucester 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amberley 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Chipping Campden 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Cam 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innsworth 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Name ESU 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Dursley1 	

PADI Scuba Open Water Diver Course



The first ever PADI Scuba Open Water Diver course where all the participants were Explorers with no Scouts (and that was not by design) took place over two weekends in October and November. Five youngsters (aged 14 – 16) from two Units took the course by storm romping through it at a pace which staggered the dive school (not to mention our leader team).

Nothing (and no one) stood a chance – exams? Scores between 98% and 92% returned for the main exam and 100% - 96% for the residual gases exam; pool skills training completed in times which allowed 30+ minutes of free swim time; both Open Water dive days completed a minimum of 2 hours early each day. A truly excellent group who will take some beating! *Derek Newman*



Octopus ESU on an Open Water dive

- Those attending were from:
- Extreme ESU 2
- No Name ESU

Climbing Course

Half term saw another group of Scouts at the Warehouse Climbing Centre in Gloucester. They completed a two-day course using both the extensive climbing walls and bouldering room to complete their badge under the expert tuition of the centre's instructors.

Those attending were from:

• Churchdown 1	• Phoenix ESU 1
• 3rd Tewkesbury 2	• Staunton & Corse 4
• Amberley 2	• Adder's Tongue ESU 1
• Rodborough 1	• 41 st Cheltenham 2
• 1 st Hatherley 1	• 1 st Winchcombe 1
• 1 st Dursley 1	•

Jamboree on the Air Weekend



Jamboree on the Air (JOTA) and Jamboree on the Internet (JOTI) is an official event of the World Organisation of the Scout Movement. Every year Scouts, Guides and Girl Scouts are invited to enable and encourage young people to communicate with one another by the means of amateur radio and the internet, providing a fun and educational Scouting experience and promoting their sense of belonging to a worldwide Scout and Guide Movement.

We had 17 young people join us for the weekends course in which as well as taking part in JOTA-JOTI they would also earn their communicator badge. We ran a number of activities on how radios work, using morse, and radio direction finding. As well as exercises in effective communication and various games and challenges. We made contacts with Scouts all over Europe using the radios, and worldwide using the internet. We also took part in the worldwide digital campfire, which proved very popular.

At the end of the weekend all the young people were presented with their communicator badges and their 2018 JOTA-JOTI badge.

Rory Lucas Devil's Chimney ESU



Those attending were from:

• Extreme ESU 1	• Staunton & Corse 1
• 1 st Dursley 1	• May Hill & Huntley 3
• Chipping Campden 1	• 45 th Abbeydale 1
• 41 st Cheltenham 5	• Churchdown 2
• Freeminers ESU 1	• Minchinhampton 2

Mechanics Badge



Another group of Scouts from across the County had a great day learning how to look after dad's car!

Skills Involved included: how engines work, checking and refilling the windscreen washer bottle, changing bulbs, radiator water levels, tyre pressures, how to change a wheel and wiper blades and MOT requirements.

Those attending were from:

• 1 st Dursley 5	• 45 th Gloucester 1
• Severnside 1	• Staunton & Corse 1
• Wotton-under-Edge 4	

Discover Scuba Try Dive



The last Discover Scuba Diving session of 2019 saw two dozen Scouts and Explorers descend on the Gloucester swimming pool – only to find the pool had allowed us to be double booked with a swimming club. Quick discussion with the club and we were able to agree how both activities could continue. The youngsters obviously enjoyed the session as three of them have already booked on to the Open Water qualification course we are running next spring.
Derek Newman

Those attending were from:

• Double 2 ESU 1	• 1st Winchcombe 3
• 1st Tetbury 2	• Severnside 5
• Selsley 2	• Staunton & Course 2
• 7th Swindon 1	• Amberley 2
• Bob's Dinosaur's ESU 1	• 3rd Tewkesbury 1
• 1st Dursley 2	• 1st Woodmancote 2

Caving Weekend



The last weekend in November as well as being the coldest of the winter so far was the one where a collection of Scouts and Explorers embarked on their caving badges. Having arrived on the Friday evening for the start of the course at Viney Hill Adventure Centre in the Forest of Dean, they were sent for a practice down the on-site artificial caving system.

Saturday dawned bright and clear, if a little frosty. The new cavers on the course spent the day exploring caves around Symonds Yat whilst the more experienced (survivors from January's caver course) headed to the Mendips to do some more difficult caving, including vertical pitches.

The two groups came together on Sunday and headed off to practice rigging and climbing ladders in a caving environment – not easy! On their return to the centre they enjoyed a talk and discussion around troglobites, troglaphiles, troglroxenes and their stygo- equivalents. This covered requirement 5 of the Explorer Caving Badge but was also an enjoyable bonus for those going for the Scout Caver Badge. Late afternoon saw parents arrive to take some very, very tired (but happy) young people home. *Derek Newman*

Those attending were from:

• Severn Steel ESU 3	• 1 st Tetbury 2
• Inferno ESU 2	• 31 st Gloucester 2
• Adder's Tongue ESU 1	• 1 st Royal Forest 2
• 1 st Dursley 1	• 1 st Cheltenham 1

Scuba Report

The first Discover Scuba Diving session of the decade was a small scale affair with only 10 participants – mind you that's the maximum for an individual session anyway! The excited scouts from 5 districts across the county descended on Tewkesbury School on the afternoon of 26th January for their taster session. Now we wait to see how many sign up to continue and do their Open Water qualification in May.



Those attending were from:

• 1 st Royal Forest	• Rodborough
• 3 rd Tewkesbury	• 1 st Tetbury
• 45 th Gloucester	• 15 th Gloucester
• 1 st Hatherley	

Electronics Badge Weekend



:We had twelve Scouts covering the full age range. Some had some experience of Electronics and some were complete novices. By the end of the weekend they had all learnt a lot about the theory and practice of this exciting hobby, which some of us turn into a career! They all built beat the buzzer games, automatic nightlights and flashing guy rope indicators from basic components. After a small amount of fault finding they all worked. We had no accidents with soldering irons this year so

well done everybody.

Dave Hall

Those attending were from:

• 1 st Hatherley 1	• 45 th Gloucester 1
• 1 st Tetbury 1	• 1 st Woodmancote 1
• Staunton & Corse 1	• Churchdown 1
• Severnside 3	• Cranham 2
• 41 st Cheltenham 1	• 1 st Royal Forest 1

Steerers Course



This two weekend course was completed just before the coronavirus restrictions came in. Seven leaders were able to complete the course and gain a Scout permit for narrowboating. The first weekend was spent near the base on the Grand Union Canal at Harefield. Apart from a run up to Rickmansworth to do a supermarket shop the rest of the time was spent in lock and

mooring practice.

The second weekend saw a trip up to Hemel Hempstead and back. On both weekends they had the use of two narrowboats, - Pisces and Merlin

Module A

During the last year we have held two evenings, and 48 Young Leaders have completed.

Those attending were from:

• Adder's Tongue ESU 2	• Black Sheep ESF 2
• Chalford Intrepid Alpacas ESU 1	• Meyer ESU 2
• Cotswold YLU 1	• Extreme ESU 4
• Forest YLU 1	• Gloucester YLU 8
• Habberpakka YLU 4	• Hereford YLU 1
• No Name ESU 1	• Nutty Badgers ESU 1
• Pioneers ESU 1	• Red Wolves ESU 4
• STYLE YLU 5	• Unmentionables ESU 2
• Wyell YLU 8	

Due to the corona virus lockdown we had to cancel:

- **Scuba DSD: 21st March**

- **Module A: 23rd March**
- **Expedition Weekends: 27th /29th March AND 17th/19th April**
- **Climbing Course: 8th & 9th April**
- **Scuba Open Water: 15th/17th May**
- **Survival Skills: 23rd/25th May** Novice, Activity +, Advanced Survival, Bushcraft & Survival
- **Scuba Adventure Weekend: 12th/14th June**
- **Module A: 2nd July**
- **Nautical Skills Weekend: 19th/21st July**
- **Canal Weekend: 2nd/4th October**

We plan to run Module A with restricted number as soon as we can. We have over 40 YLs on the waiting list!

Let us hope we can run courses again in 2021.

I would like to thank the many leaders who have run or helped on these events. Their input has been excellent and is very much appreciated

Paddy Langham

County Badge Course Co-ordinator (Gloucestershire)

County Narrow boating Assessor (Gloucestershire)