

THE QUEST

19th Hendon (3rd Mill Hill) Scout Group Newsletter

Congratulations to our 2026 award winners

- **Most Improved Squirrel** – Antonia Scheul
- **Best Squirrel** – Noah Mendel
- **Best Rainbow** – Millie Corp
- **Most Improved Beaver** – Arya Ray Rivas
- **Best Lodge Leader** – Elliot Smith
- **Joan Webster Cup** – Alfred-Ray Beckles
- **Best Brownie** – Harriet Cook
- **Most Improved Cub (Wolves)** – Eva Gherceanu
- **Most Improved Cub (Tigers)** – Eesa Nasir
- **Best Sixer (Wolves)** – Nickan Moharrer
- **Best Sixer (Tigers)** – Maya Laing
- **Best Cub (Wolves)** – Muhammad Hoceini & Ruairidh Sutherland
- **Best Cub (Tigers)** – Stefan Stangu & Jenna Yamani
- **Best Guide** – Calisa Amoako-Gyampah
- **Most Improved Scout** – Nnaemeka Ngoka
- **Best Patrol Leader** – Aisha Ahmed
- **Wardle Cup** – Jayden Divani
- **Ranger of the Year** – Caitlin Humphrey
- **Best Explorer** – Damian Scheul
- **Look Wide Plate** – Faith Mhuru
- **Best Camper** – Seona Sutherland (Guide)
- **Best Summer Camp Patrol** – Adaese Udokwu, Isabelle Freeman, Isabelle Kasparaviciute, Matilda French & Seona Sutherland (Guides)
- **Murch Cup** – Dylan Kelleher

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- **Gold DofE Garden Party**
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- **What is Gilwell Park**



Another Great Year of a Fabulous Group!

By Bosun

What a truly extraordinary few months it has been for 19th Hendon (3rd Mill Hill)!

As I sit down to write this opening message for our last issue before the summer holidays, I find myself genuinely lost for words and those of you who know me will appreciate just how rare an occasion that is! From Buckingham Palace to the banks of the Welsh Harp, from the skies of the RAF Museum to the campsite at Houens Odde in Denmark, our young people, our leaders, and our families have once again demonstrated everything that makes this group so utterly special.

At the heart of this issue is our Annual Activity Day and Awards Presentation, held on a glorious 20th June. It was one of those days that reminds you exactly why we do what we do. To see our young people throwing themselves into activities with such energy, determination and joy, and then to stand before them and recognise their achievements, never, ever gets old. Congratulations to every single one of our 2026 Award Winners. Your names on this front page are there because you earned them, and I could not be more proud of each and every one of you.

This issue is also packed with some truly remarkable stories. Our Explorers have had a standout year completing Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Awards, representing Scouting with distinction at Mansion House, and showing time and again that they are not just the future of this group, but very much its present. I was particularly moved reading the article by Bill Taylor (Group President), which beautifully draws a thread between the expedition logbooks of the 1960s and the achievements of our Explorers today. Scouting is a living, breathing tradition, and it is humbling to see it continue to thrive in our group.

I am also enormously proud to highlight a milestone that deserves particular recognition: leaders Karun, Joshua, Hannah, and Sophie have all achieved both their King's Scout Award and their Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award this year. This is the highest accolade in Scouting, and their dedication is an inspiration to us all. Alongside this, heartfelt congratulations go to Geoff Cook (Group Treasurer) and Robert Brennan (Provo), who were awarded the prestigious Barnet Scrolls of Honour for their outstanding long-term service to our group. These are individuals who give so much, so quietly, and so consistently, and it is wonderful to see them recognised.

Of course, none of what you read in these pages happens by accident. It is the product of our dedicated leaders, young leaders and supporters, who give their time week in and week out because they believe in what Scouting can do for young people. If you are reading this and wondering whether you could play a role, whether you have something to offer, please do get in touch. Our doors are always open, and there is always tea in the pot.

Now, as the summer holidays approach, we have the most exciting event of our year on the horizon: Summer Camp at Gilwell Park from 1st to 8th August. For those heading there for the first time, you are in for something very special indeed. For those returning, well, you already know! Do follow our Facebook page for daily updates during the week.

After that, we look forward to welcoming everyone back for the Autumn term, beginning Thursday 10th September, and of course to our magnificent Dinner & Dance on 17th October, black tie at the ready!

Until then, have a wonderful summer. Stay adventurous, stay curious, and as always, **Be Prepared**.



Annual Activity Day & Awards Presentation

By Koala

On Saturday 20th June 2026, the 19th Hendon (3rd Mill Hill) Scout Group came together for one of the most eagerly anticipated events in the scouting calendar — our Annual Activity Day and Awards Presentation Afternoon. It was, by every measure, a truly magnificent day.

A Morning of Adventure

The day got underway promptly at 10 o'clock, with our young members throwing themselves enthusiastically into a wide range of exciting activities carefully designed to test their skill, agility, and fitness. The energy and determination on display was a joy to behold, with every child giving their very best and rising admirably to each challenge presented to them.

Afternoon Competitions

The afternoon brought with it the always-popular and highly competitive tug-of-war contests. Teams from within the group battled it out with tremendous spirit and sportsmanship. However, the real highlight came when our parents stepped up to take part — with some brilliantly spirited bouts between parents and leaders, and parents and children alike. The atmosphere throughout was absolutely electric, with plenty of cheering, laughter, and encouragement ringing out across the afternoon. The children had a thoroughly wonderful time, and it was clear that the fun was equally shared by all who attended.

Annual General Meeting

Following the afternoon's activities, we turned to the more formal proceedings of the day with our Annual General Meeting — a legal requirement that every Scout group is obliged to fulfil. This was conducted efficiently and in good spirit, ensuring all necessary business was duly covered before moving on to the celebrations ahead.



The Annual Highlights Video

One of the most cherished moments of the afternoon followed — the screening of our annual highlights video. The film beautifully captured some of the fantastic achievements, adventures, and memories that our young members have created throughout the 2025–2026 scouting year. It served as a wonderful reminder of just how much our group accomplishes, and there was no shortage of smiles, proud moments, and the occasional happy tear from parents and leaders alike.

Awards Presentation 2026

The day culminated in the presentation of our annual awards to the well-deserving winners of 2026. It was a proud and emotional occasion, celebrating the hard work, dedication, and outstanding achievements of our young members over the past year. Congratulations to all of this year's award recipients — your commitment and enthusiasm are an inspiration to the entire group.

The full list of this year's award winners can be found on the front page of this newsletter — please do take a moment to congratulate our wonderful recipients!

A Community Coming Together

We were also delighted to once again welcome our friends from the 3rd Mill Hill Guide Group, who joined us for the day and thoroughly embraced the occasion. Their presence, as always, enriched the event and further strengthened the wonderful bonds between our two groups.

The parents who joined us on the day deserve a special mention — not only for supporting their children and cheering them on throughout the activities, but for getting stuck in themselves and adding enormously to the fantastic atmosphere that made the day so memorable.

A Final Word of Thanks

All in all, the 2026 Annual Activity Day and Awards Presentation was a resounding success and a shining example of everything that makes our Scout and Guide community so special. Events like these do not happen without considerable effort and commitment, and it is only right that we extend our sincerest thanks to all of our leaders, whose dedication and hard work behind the scenes make days like this possible.

It is a privilege to be part of a group that continues to bring young people, families, and our wider community together in such a positive and meaningful way. Here's to many more wonderful days ahead!

Flying High at the RAF Museum!

By Maya Laing - Cubs, Tigers Pack

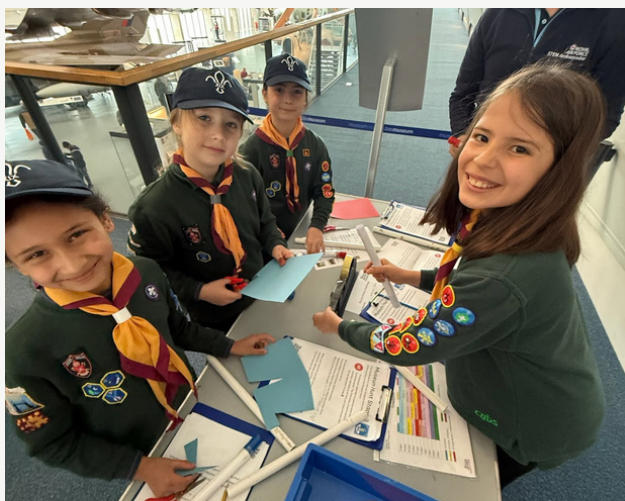


On Saturday 16 May, both cub groups of 19th Hendon 3rd Mill Hill (Tigers and Wolves) combined to have an outing to the Royal Air Force Museum.

First, we started at H6 (hanger 6) and had a brief presentation about what the day was going to be about. Astonishingly, the presenter was an Ex-Royal Airforce pilot!

After the presentation, we got to make model rockets made out of: paper, card, tape and small rubber cups, which we shot out of a launcher and one went so far that it went over the edge of the mezzanine floor.

Next, we got to look around the hanger, which had real planes that had the oil taken out so they were safe to see inside; we completed a worksheet, where we found different planes around the room. After, we had lunch outside the cafe and had some playtime in the nearby playground, that had a replication of a nearby building! Overall we had memorable day and lots of fun!



A Right Royal Celebration

By Shere Khan



In May, three of us attended Buckingham Palace Gardens to celebrate achieving our Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award, as guests of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

We attended the morning party, where we listened to a speech from The Duke of Edinburgh. He reminisced about his time doing the award, and recounted some funny stories about his expedition, and how he was presented his award by his father.

The main guest speaker at the event was Jake Humphrey, a famous presenter, who gave an uplifting and motivating speech about how the challenges and hardships he has faced in life, is what helped him to become the successful person he now is. It was inspiring to hear from someone who has major success in their career, spanning across a multitude of areas.

After the speeches we were free to explore the gardens, which was an incredible opportunity to get to see something that not many other people will have the chance to experience. We had a small snack, of tea and a cake in a marquee in the gardens, as we reflected on the day and everything that we achieved together over the past year. It was a perfect way to conclude our DofE experience.

This was the final part of the DofE and King's Scout Award, having attended Windsor Castle in April, and being presented with our certificates at our group awards evening in January. To be able to celebrate our success, and achievements with each other, and Bosun and Provo who were instrumental in ensuring we completed our stages and the final expedition.



Explorers Get Crew'd up!



By Poppy - Explorers

In June, for my Gold Duke of Edinburgh award, I completed my residential at Paccar Scout Camp, where I spent 5 days helping with the running of the camp. I had a great time as it allowed me to make new friends and develop new skills. During the residential, I learnt how to belay and assisted with activities such as zipwires, crate stacking and rifle shooting. The residential gave me the opportunity to build my confidence, improve my teamwork and communication skills, and become more independent. Despite being a lot of work, it was a lot of fun and I had an amazing experience.



By Kayah and Aliza- Explorers

At our five day residential, completed as part of our Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award, we worked alongside a team of people we had not met before at Paccar Scout Camp. Throughout the week, we helped lead activities including archery, rock climbing, crate stacking and zip lines, strengthening our communication, teamwork and leadership skills. We also learned new skills such as belaying, giving us the confidence and responsibility to support climbers throughout the activities. Overall, the residential was very enjoyable and rewarding, as we developed new practical outdoor skills, met new people and contribute to creating a positive experience for everyone taking part. We even got to partake in a few activities like caving and archery which was super fun!

Chip and Koala take on Denmark!

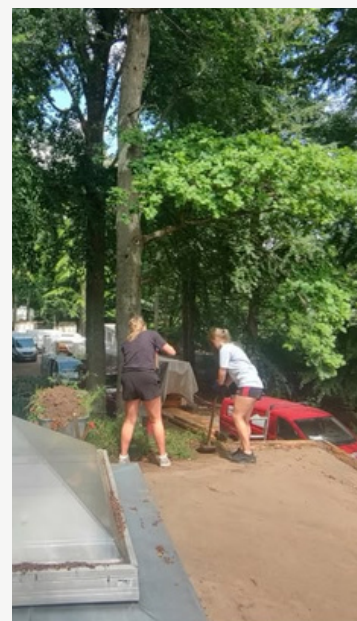
By Chip and Koala



A massive thank you to everyone who supported our bingo night! Your incredible generosity successfully funded our Gold DofE Residential at the beautiful Houens Odde Scout Centre in Denmark, where we spent a week at the start of July.

Throughout the week, we threw ourselves into the day-to-day operations of this busy international campsite. We helped keep the site running smoothly by carrying out service rounds, welcoming visiting Scout groups, completing kitchen duties, repairing and cleaning the toilet block roofs, and using a chainsaw to cut logs.

We also had the opportunity to stay with Scouts from different countries, learning about their Scouting traditions and sharing our own experiences. We thoroughly enjoyed completing our Gold Residential at the Scout campsite in Denmark and are thankful for the opportunity.



Why Volunteering at Beavers and Cubs is Actually the Best Thing Ever!

By Josh and Damian – Explorers

So, I've been volunteering at my local Beavers and Cubs group for a bit now, and honestly? It's easily the funniest part of my week.

Before I started, I thought it was just going to be a bunch of boring stuff like tying knots or sitting in circles. But it's actually pure chaos in the best way possible. If you need some extra hours for something like DofE (Duke of Edinburgh), or you're just bored and want to do something cool, here is why you should totally do it.

1. You get to act like a kid again

School is constantly stressful, and everyone expects you to act like an adult all the time. But at Beavers (kids aged 6-8) and Cubs (aged 8-10), the rules are completely different.

One week we're building arts and crafts, sometimes it's cultural, the next we are going to field to do sporty activities, life skills, and even going to complete badge after badge. You basically have an excuse to do all the fun stuff you used to do when you were little, and nobody looks at you weirdly for it.

2. The kids are absolutely hilarious

Little kids have zero filter, and they say the wildest things.

They will look at you and randomly ask, "Why are you so tall?"

They'll tell you incredibly dramatic, 10-minute stories about their pet hamster.

They genuinely look up to you like you're a celebrity.

If you walk into the local shop and one of them sees you, they will literally point and scream your leader name like they just spotted a famous YouTuber. It's a massive ego boost, not gonna lie.

3. It completely cures boredom

If you're stuck in a loop of scrolling on TikTok for hours and feeling like your brain is melting, this is the perfect reset.

For two hours, you literally cannot look at your phone because you're too busy trying to stop 20 seven-year-olds from gluing themselves to a table or eating raw marshmallows. It's loud, it's fast, and it completely takes your mind off exams and school stress.

4. It looks amazing on your CV

Let's be real—at some point, we all need stuff to put on college applications or job resumes.

Saying you helped run a youth group shows you're actually responsible and can handle shouting over a room full of energetic kids. It proves you have leadership skills without you having to sit through some boring online course.

The Verdict

You don't need to be some outdoor survival expert to do this. As long as you're down to play some games, help out with crafts, and laugh when things go wrong (like a tent collapsing), you'll be great at it.

Seriously, find a local group and give it a go. It's way better than sitting at home doing nothing.



What is DofE?

By Kayah, Poppy, Aliza – Explorers



The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a nationally recognised youth achievement programme that encourages young people to develop skills, stay active, volunteer, and take on adventurous challenges. Participants can complete Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards, each designed to help them grow in confidence, resilience, and independence.

How Scouts Helps with DofE

One of the great advantages of being a Scout is that many activities already contribute towards DofE sections. Weekly meetings, camps, expeditions, volunteering projects, and skill development can all count towards completing an award.

Scouting provides opportunities to:

- Learn new skills such as navigation, cooking, first aid, and leadership.
- Take part in regular physical activities and outdoor adventures.
- Volunteer within the Scout Group or wider community.
- Complete expedition training and practice journeys.

This means many Explorers are already well on their way to achieving a DofE Award without even realising it.

Building Skills for Life

Both Scouts and DofE share a common goal: helping young people gain Skills for Life. Through participation, young people develop teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and leadership skills that will benefit them in education, employment, and everyday life.

Completing a DofE Award also demonstrates commitment and determination, qualities that are highly valued by colleges, universities, and employers.

Adventure and Achievement

The expedition section is often one of the most memorable parts of DofE. Explorer scouts use their outdoor skills to plan routes, carry equipment, work as a team, and navigate challenging terrain. These experiences create lasting memories and a real sense of achievement.

Our experience

We found the expedition both challenging but it enjoyable. Our project on our expedition was to locate different benches along our journey where we took pictures of us to track our journey. We also enjoyed campfires in the evening where we played cards and enjoyed reminiscing on our journey. Overall we made unforgettable memories and had immense amounts of fun so we definitely recommend beginning your dofe journey with 19th Hendon!

Scouts at the Welsh Harp

By Merlin



A fun time was had by all when the Scouts swapped Courtlands School for the Phoenix Canoe Club & Outdoor Centre at the Welsh Harp (also known as Brent Reservoir) recently.

Everyone who went got to get on the water, either on a paddle-board or in a canoe. Those who volunteered to go in the canoes got the chance to swap over later on and see if they could keep their balance on a paddle-board (not as easy as it looks). Fortunately everyone had remembered to bring a change of clothes as getting wet was most definitely on the agenda, for Leaders as well as Scouts... even for those who chose not to jump off the jetty at the end!

This is most definitely an activity that we will be looking to repeat next year.



Helping at Mansion House

By Khadija and Hamza - Explorers



Members of 19th Hendon Scout Group recently had the privilege of assisting at the Banquet held at Mansion House, a highly prestigious and distinguished event. As the only Scout Group invited to support the evening, we were proud to represent Scouting in such a professional setting. Our responsibilities included welcoming guests on arrival, distributing event brochures, assisting attendees to their seats, and greeting guests at the staircase leading into the main hall. These duties allowed us to contribute to the smooth running of the event while interacting with a wide range of guests. Overall, it was an honour to be involved in such a significant occasion and a valuable experience for everyone who attended.



Big Adventures for Our Youngest Pioneers!



Our Squirrels have had an absolutely brilliant year of playing, learning, and growing together! From wild outdoor bug hunts to high-bounce adventures, here are the highlights of their fantastic year:

- **Explorers & Builders:** We took our learning outside to hunt for bugs for the Explore Outdoors badge, and headed back indoors to design and build amazing Lego structures.
- **Mad Scientists:** The Exciting Experiments badge was a massive hit! The Squirrels loved getting messy and learning about science with exploding vinegar volcanoes and fizzy Coke-and-Mentos geysers.
- **Celebrating Together:** We learned about global festivals and played games from different cultures for our All Together and Let's Celebrate badges, before throwing a spooktacular Halloween party in our best costumes.
- **High-Flying Fun:** A major highlight of the year was our epic trip to Inflata Nation! The Squirrels showed incredible bravery and cheered each other on as they conquered the giant inflatables.

We are so proud of how much our Squirrels have grown in confidence, skills, and friendship this year. We can't wait to see what they achieve next!



Our Year in a Nutshell!



It's been an action-packed, growth-filled year at 19th Hendon! Our growing colony has been busy exploring the world, building friendships, and mastering new skills. Here are the best bits from our year:

- **Outdoor Adventures:** We kicked off the year with an amazing sleepover at Northern Heights, building campfires and earning our Camp Craft badges.
- **Out of This World:** Our Space term featured 3D rocket dens, alien puppets, and recreating star constellations using yummy pretzels and marshmallows.
- **Show & Tell Superstars:** The Collector badge proved we have some amazing young geologists and hobbyists in our ranks, boosting everyone's public speaking confidence!
- **Empathy & Inclusion:** For our Disability badge, the Beavers painted beautiful hidden-disability sunflowers with their left hands and designed posters to learn more about ADHD and Autism—showing true 19th Hendon compassion.
- **Global Citizens:** We traveled the world from our hall—practicing French, crafting Portuguese Azulejos tiles, and learning how Fairtrade products protect our planet.
- **Healthy Habits:** We finished strong by exploring mental and physical fitness, wrapped up with colorful, healthy fruit kebabs!

With growing numbers and endless energy, 19th Hendon is definitely the place to be. Thank you to our amazing Beavers and volunteers—bring on next year's adventures!



Parliament Trips, Science & Wilderness Skills!



It has been another phenomenally busy and successful year for both our Wolves and Tigers packs! Starting the year with a bang—bagging three badges before the October half-term—our Cubs have been learning, exploring, and building teamwork skills all year long.

Here are the biggest highlights of our year:

- **Eco-Warriors:** Through a multi-week Carbon Literacy programme, the Cubs tackled the Environmental Conservation badge, learning how recycling and reducing energy usage can make a massive positive impact on the planet.
- **Cubs in Parliament:** For UK Parliament Week, we learned about democracy and voting, which culminated in a spectacular, real-life tour of the House of Commons and House of Lords!
- **Hands-on Skills:** From recreating famous photos for the Photography badge to making (mostly!) successful "ice cream in a bag" for the Scientist badge, our Cubs loved being creative, practical, and independent.
- **To the Skies:** In May, we visited the RAF Museum, where the Cubs made and launched their own rockets, explored aviation history, and earned their Stage 2 Air Activities badge.
- **Survival Prep:** To get ready for Summer Camp, we headed to Frith Grange to master the essentials of shelter building, fire lighting, and campfire safety.

Our Cubs have shown incredible curiosity, determination, and teamwork this year. We can't wait for Summer Camp and another fantastic year of adventures ahead!



Fire Hoses, Laser Tag & Filmmaking!



It has been a massively rewarding year of growth for our Scout troop, so much so that we are incredibly close to adding a sixth patrol! With new Patrol Leaders stepping up and plenty of fresh faces joining the adventure, here are our top highlights from the year:

- **Calling the Fire Brigade:** We visited Mill Hill Fire Station where the Scouts explored the engines, tried on the heavy firefighting kit, and got to use the real high-pressure hoses (sending quite a few damp but very happy Scouts home!).
- **Spooky Halloween:** From giant inflatable dinosaurs to terrifying clowns, the Scouts went all-out on their costumes for a brilliant night of spooky games.
- **Epic Laser Tag:** We wrapped up the winter term with a high-energy laser tag party. The Scouts attended in huge numbers and easily outmaneuvered the leaders on the battlefield!
- **Action!** During the colder months, the Scouts got creative by writing, storyboarding, and producing their own short film projects, showing off fantastic imagination and teamwork.
- **Back to Basics:** We spent time at Frith Grange brushing up on vital outdoor survival skills—from navigation and first aid to fire-lighting—in preparation for our upcoming camping season.

With summer camp, menu planning, and our big Activity Day just around the corner, we are incredibly proud of how much our Scouts have achieved. What a fantastic troop to be a part of!



Leadership, Adventure & Community!



It has been another stellar year for our Explorer Unit, defined by one key word: Community. From conquering the outdoors to supporting the younger generations of 19th Hendon, our Explorers have stepped up in a big way.

Here are the standout highlights from the past year:

- **Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Triumphs:** The unit continues to smash the DofE challenge! In October, five Explorers completed their Bronze Expedition, and we celebrated our newest Silver Award achievers at our January Awards Evening. Meanwhile, our Gold team conquered their practice run in March and are gearing up for the final expedition this summer.
- **Young Leaders in Action:** Our Explorers are the backbone of the group! Serving as Young Leaders, they have been volunteering across all the younger sections—running games, helping with badges, and proving themselves as incredible mentors and role models.
- **Cracking the Code & Laser Tag:** Teamwork wasn't just for hikes! The unit put their brains to the test in a high-pressure Escape Room (with both teams successfully breaking out in time!) and celebrated Christmas with an epic round of laser tag.
- **Unbeatable Vibe:** Whether hiking in the rain, learning advanced survival first aid, or running activities for the Scouts, the tight-knit, supportive atmosphere of our unit is what makes Explorers so special.

We are incredibly proud of our Explorers as they continue to lead, support each other, and grow into outstanding young adults. We can't wait to have the unit join us at Summer Camp!



Just as much fun for Adults!



What an absolutely phenomenal and dynamic year of growth, adventure, and community it has been for 19th Hendon! With a thriving membership of over 140 young people, our group is stronger than ever—beautifully blending our rich traditions with fresh, exciting programmes for today's youth.

The Joy of Volunteering: Fun, Camps, and Great Memories

While we teach vital skills, the real secret of 19th Hendon is just how much fun we have doing it! There is nothing quite like the buzz of camps—getting outdoors, building shelters, and sharing laughs around the campfire. Getting to take part in these wild adventures alongside the children, watching their confidence grow while having a brilliant time ourselves, is incredibly rewarding.

Our leaders work hard, but we know how to play hard, too! This year's excellent Leaders Christmas Party was a particular highlight—a fantastic night of celebration, laughter, and well-deserved downtime for our amazing team.

Top Leadership Highlights

- **King's Scout and DofE Gold Triumphs:** We are incredibly proud of leaders Karun, Joshua, Hannah, and Sophie, who all achieved both their King's Scout Award and their Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award this year. This is the highest youth award in Scouting—an exceptional milestone!
- **Barnet Scrolls of Honour:** Congratulations to Geoff Cook (Group Treasurer) and Robert Brennan (Provo), who were awarded the prestigious Barnet Scrolls of Honour for their outstanding, long-term contributions to our group.

Join the Fun: Your Next Big Adventure Starts Here!

You don't have to be under 18 to have all the fun! If you want to make lifelong friends, escape the daily grind, and experience the magic of campfires and outdoor adventures, we want you on our team.

We have the perfect way for you to join the fun! Unleash your inner big kid as an Assistant Leader helping run our wild weekly youth sessions, or keep the adventure on track behind the scenes. We're looking for a chatty Membership Secretary to welcome new families, a keyboard-warrior Group Administrator to keep us organized from the comfort of home, and a handy Maintenance Hero to give our awesome Quest Centre headquarters some occasional TLC.

Our doors are always open, and the kettle is always on. Get in touch today and find out how you can share in the fun!



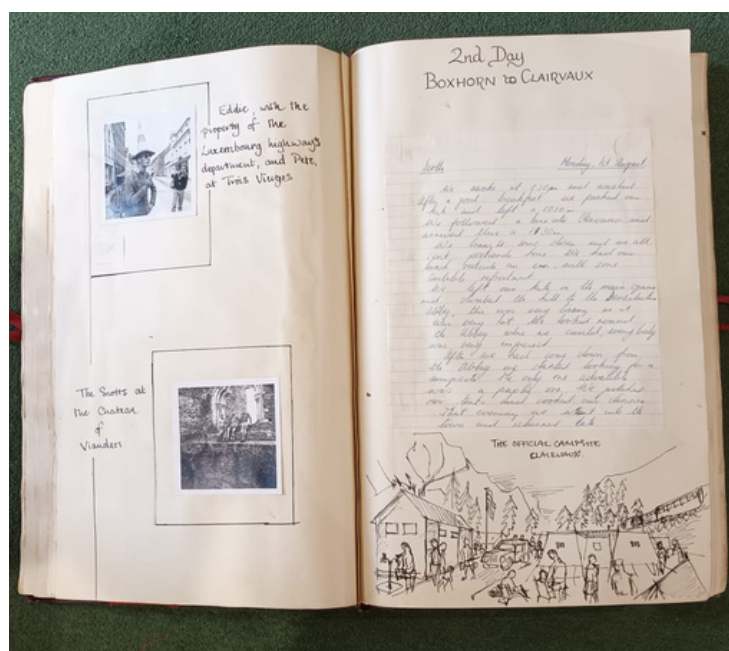
Explorer Scouting: Past, Present, and Future...

By Bill Taylor

Seeing recent photos of our Explorers doing their King's Scout journey reminded me to look in the Quest Centre to find the logbooks of expeditions past, recalling journeys in the 1960s and 70s when I was a Senior Scout (or Explorer, as we know them today).

Thick, oversized books filled with handwritten daily reports of what we did came alive for me as I scan-read the pages. Complete with everything from shopping receipts and sweet wrappers to beer mats and foreign currency stuck in to give context to the photographs and sketches, they made me remember the people, the events, and the sheer adventure of it all.

The Quest Explorer Unit traditionally organised their annual summer expeditions—one year in the UK, and the next in Europe. The log I pulled down from the shelf was unusual; not adventurous in the typical sense like hiking in Scotland or potholing and canoeing in Ireland, but a couple of weeks in Luxembourg and the Mosel Valley. Walking roads and paths, and riding by bus, train, and boat, we were given unusual tasks to complete and reports to write along the way—and all for just £16! (Google tells me you could have bought 960 Mars bars for that money back then; today, it would only buy you 26!)



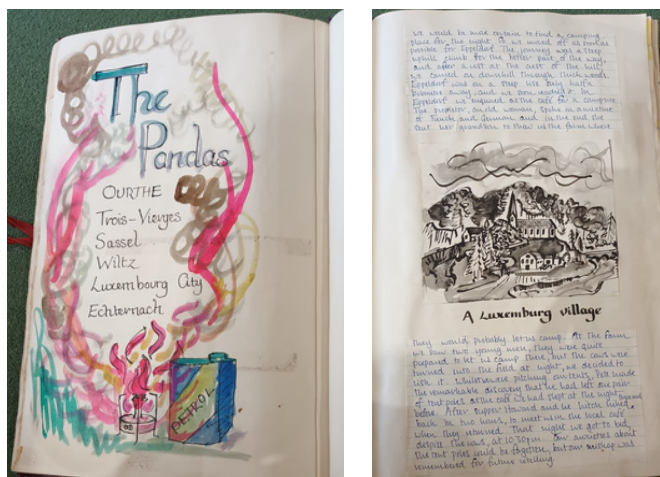
The leaders—an interesting bunch, aren't they always?!—planned the event so we got to meet local people, realise that not everyone speaks English, and see and record fascinating things.

Arriving at a campsite on the border of Belgium and West Luxembourg after a day exploring Brussels, each patrol was given an envelope with tasks to do over the next five days. A bit like a gentle, retro version of 'Race across the World', each patrol chose its own route and looked after its own budget until we were all to meet up in Echternach.

The next envelope instructed us to find our way to Koblenz, where we watched the amazing 'Rhein in Flammen' (Rhine in Flames) and joined in by floating our own lit candles on the Rhine, supported on a variety of makeshift 'British' craft.

Carrying all our own kit—tents, Primus stoves, and a bit of food—we mapped 5km of road, crossed a main town bridge in swimming trunks, rode in a police car, sketched and photographed some of the wonderful old buildings in Trier, got one of our scouts dressed up as a Cathedral choirboy, learnt firsthand how to turn grapes into wine, talked to local people about their jobs, learnt the Legend of the Lorelei, drank rather too much Bier, and—most importantly—learned that if you spend your weekly food allowance too early, you go hungry later!

So now, as we are rightly proud to have our own Explorers achieving their King's Scout, DofE Gold, and Silver Awards, maybe it's time to add to those logbooks and fill up those shelves with a brand-new history...



Scouting History: The Story of Gilwell Park

By Merlin



This year, our Summer Camp will once again be at Gilwell Park, which is one of the most significant places in Scouting. It was the first campsite to be owned and run by the Scout Association, and it's basically where adult Leader training started. Such is its importance that when Robert Baden-Powell was made a lord, he chose to be Lord Baden-Powell of Gilwell.



It's been a Scout campsite since 1919, when it was bought for the Scouts by a businessman called William de Bois Maclaren. He was an early Scout leader in Scotland who, on a visit to East London, realised that the local Scouts needed to have their own campsite somewhere in the surrounding countryside. He looked for suitable land in Epping Forest to the north of the metropolis – and he found the Gilwell Hall estate, a wooded patch of land overlooking the River Lea which centred around a manor house that had fallen into disrepair.

Baden-Powell decided early on that in addition to being a campsite for Scouts, Gilwell would also be the place where adult Leaders would be properly trained to run Scout troops. Trainee leaders often camped alongside Scouts in the early days as a result. B-P hired Francis Gidney, an early Scout Leader, to run the place. It was Gidney who suggested that Leaders who'd passed their training be given a special Leaders' scarf as well as their beads (the Wood Badge). This scarf is beige in colour and has a small tartan badge on the back (contrary to what some people think, it's not Scout tartan – and yes, there is such a thing – but the tartan of the Maclaren clan, in honour of the man who bought Gilwell). While most Leaders these days wear their Group or District scarves, you may occasionally see them wearing what has become known as the Gilwell scarf.

Gidney, who had a reputation as a highly entertaining campfire leader, also came up with the axe-and-log logo that is associated with Gilwell to this day (the blanket badge shown on the left is the one I bought on a Cub camp there in 1989). He wanted to make sure that Gilwell was associated with the outdoors rather than administration (back then, the Scout Association's offices were in Central London, in a building on Buckingham Palace Road known as Imperial Headquarters), and as burying an axe blade in a log was a key part of axe safety back then, he chose that. Sadly Gidney's tenure at Gilwell did not last for long. He had never fully recovered from being gassed while serving in the Army in the First World War, in addition to which he often clashed with the administrators at Imperial HQ. He resigned in 1923 and died five years later, aged 38.

One thing Gilwell never had in the early days was a pond or lake on which to do water activities. The one that exists today was in fact created by a Luftwaffe bomb that was dropped during the Second World War – which is why it's called the Bomb Hole.

Today, the manor house (now restored) is called the White House and is used as offices (the Scout Association moved out of Imperial HQ many years ago). It used to provide hotel-style accommodation for visitors and even had its own bar, which Bosun and I visited when we did part of our Leader training at Gilwell in the early 2000s!

If you're interested in Scouting history, there's plenty to see in the vicinity of the White House. Just behind the White House, near the open-air chapel, you'll find a bust of Baden-Powell which is a favourite spot for group photos (with your Group's scarf adorning B-P, of course!). Next to that is a bronze cast of his footprint – a gift presented by Hungarian Scouts in 1933. A popular tradition is to try to put your foot in his, which is why it looks so well-polished!



Many visitors to Gilwell don't realise that the Greenwich Meridian Line actually runs through the site, so it is located in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres! Apparently there is a commemorative plaque marking the Line, although I've never found it on previous visits. Maybe I will find it this time...

BADGES EARNED IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS

Squirrels – All About Me, All Together, Local Superhero, Let's Celebrate, Space Explorer

Beavers – Animal Friend, Digital Citizen, Global Issues

Cubs (Wolf Pack) – Athletics, Gardener, Scientist

Cubs (Tiger Pack) – Artist, Athletics, Gardener, Photography

Scouts – Fire Safety, First Aid, Scientist



UPCOMING EVENTS



THE SCOUTING HIGHLIGHT OF 2026! Summer Camp at Gilwell Park!

Our next issue will cover the fun and excitement of Summer Camp 2026, don't forget all the pictures are on our Facebook page already!



RETURN TO MEETINGS

Following an incredible Summer Camp, and a break for the holidays, we will be returning to meetings to kick off the Autumn term on Thursday 10th September. Have a great Summer, and we look forward to welcoming you all back soon!



SAVE THE DATE! Let's Get Fancy!

Calling all Scout Group Adult Members, Parents & Supporters! Mark your calendars **NOW** for our annual, unforgettable **Dinner & Dance!**

When: 17th October What to Expect: A dazzling night of celebration, connection, and pure fun! Dress Code: Time to shine! Think Black Tie & Evening Dresses. Feasting: Indulge in a scrumptious 3-course meal! It's your chance to celebrate our incredible community, catch up with friends, and support the Group in spectacular style. You won't want to miss this!

More details (and booking info!) coming your way soon. For now, just

SAVE THE DATE!

