



WIMBLEDON and WANDLE
DISTRICT SCOUT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

for the year

MAY 2013-2014



Annual General Meeting
of the
Wimbledon and Wandle District Scout Council

8pm on Wednesday 7th May, 2014
1st Lower Morden Headquarters, Bow Lane, Morden

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Chairman's welcome and introductions
3. Approval of Minutes of AGM on 16th May 2013
4. Report of the District Executive Committee.
5. Approval of the Accounts for the period ending 31st Dec 2013.
6. District Commissioner.
7. To approve the District Commissioner's nomination for District Chairman and nominated members of the District Executive Committee.
8. To resolve that the District Scout Council elects 5 members to serve on the District Executive
9. Election of officers: District Secretary
 District Treasurer
 District Executive Committee x 5
9. To elect a representative to the County Executive.
10. Appointment of Independent Examiner.
11. County Commissioner
12. Presentations.
13. Any other business

To be followed by refreshments and light buffet.

Wimbledon and Wandle District Scout Council
Annual General Meeting
Held on Wednesday 8th May 2013
At 1st Lower Morden HQ, Bow Lane, Morden

The meeting opened with a prayer led by the District President, Jack Atkins, in which he asked those present to remember those in Scouting in the District who have passed away in the last 12 months– Pat Devine, Mary Webb, Simon Shute.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Francis Corrigan, Tim Kerridge, Andy Dimon and from Dave Bixby who would be attending later as he was helping out at 2nd Morden Scouts.

2. Welcome and Introduction

Andrew Edmonds, District Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Ian Newbery, the County Commissioner and introduced the “top table” with a special welcome to Jackie Lyon who has been helping as assistant Treasurer over the past few months.

3. Approval of Minutes of AGM held 16th May 2012

Proposer – Paul Atkins

Secunder – David Williams

4. Report of the District Executive Committee

Chairman’s report accepted as circulated. He had reported the developments of the Executive in the monthly Links magazine. He reported that this 3rd year was the end of “the forming stage”. He had a great team in the Committee which worked well but there will be vacancies in it in the future. His thanks to all those who had contributed to the past year was included in this year’s circulated Annual Report.

5. Approval of the Accounts for the period ending 31st December 2012

Keith presented two forms of account: A “Summary of District Account” for the year ended 31st December 2012 (single sheet) and The Annual report and accounts for 2012 (several pages). When producing this year’s figures I felt that what most of you want to know is “how much have we got as a DISTRICT” without confusing the issue with Unit, Badge, Store and other funds which although they must be included in the formal report are, in a sense, side issue. The following points are on the single sheet:-A big thank you to Sue Southwood our former District Secretary for her kind donation. The receipts from the Store and Badge Accounts these are not “profits” but accumulations of income from sales in previous years. As you may know, your Executive recently decided to return all profits from the Store for 2012 (and on-going) to groups. I feel that we owe a tremendous vote of thanks to Brian and Lesley for the work that they put in on the Store and Badge sales.

The District Camp –it may have been a very wet and muddy event but it did come in well under budget with expenses of £28,101 and receipts of £24,360. Here a huge “Bravo” to Neil and his team.

Rental incomes:- There are no shown comparative figures for last year but had I done so you would see that previously there has been no income from the Kenneth Black Flat. Your Executive, and in particular the members of a small sub-committee (Colin Stubbs, Peter Treagust and David Williams) which was actually formed on the 5th October 2010, have in fact achieved an income of £12,000 per annum from the flat. (The amount shown is for a part year). Of course there was some considerable expense updating the premises (£18,796) involved in achieving the rental but by the time we reach the end of 2013 we will have covered the costs and future rentals will be clear income.

All of the above figures are included in the full Annual Report.

Keith ended his Report by thanking John Young for all of his work as Treasurer over many years and Ted Aslett for his work as our Independent Examiner.

Dave Christmas raised the question as to whether or not we should sell the block at KBH and build flats on it. Discussion then took place but Keith explained the reasons this would be impractical. (What would County think if we had over £1 million pounds in our bank account!)

Adoption of the Annual Accounts – Proposer – Neil McLauchlan
Secunder – Dave Gould.

6. District Commissioner

In addition to his circulated report Joe added the following:-

He expressed his sincere and grateful thanks to those present and especially to the Executive and to Andy who provides us with robust leadership and to the District Team for their energy – 60 youngsters attended the last camp.

The Explorer and Network numbers have increased this past year and to the hardworking Key Managers for a difficult but rewarding job. Joe thanked them all. Andy Hayward will be stepping down as ADC Beavers this year.

The District Development Plan – this is being reviewed and updated to build on. We have £8000 for Leader training and perhaps younger leaders could act as mentors to help others get through training?

We will require a Safety and Safe Guarding Officer as it will be necessary for all adults to attend a briefing. We now have “shedloads” of Nights Away permit applications coming in. We are looking for an Appointments Secretary as Joan Burgess is resigning next year after doing this job for many years. We are also looking for someone to be our District’s County rep.

Joe concluded his report by saying that we have a District that works together.

7 To receive the District Commissioner’s nomination for District Chairman and Nominated members of the District Executive

Andy Edmonds to continue as our District Chairman.

Joe Rogerson (DC) and Paul Henderson (DESC) Ex Officio.

Nominated members: Keith Angliss, Peter Newman, Joan Burgess and Jim Anning.

8 Election of Officers

District Secretary Muriel Treagust

District Treasurer Jackie Lyon

District Exec. Members Alan Green, Peter Treagust, Brian Whalebone, Robert Brummell.

The above were Proposed by Dave Gould

Seconded by Jim Anning

9 To elect a representative to the County Executive

No Nominations/volunteer

Subsequent to the meeting Jim Anning offered to stand as our Representative

10 Appointment of Independent Examiner

For the past few years Ted Aslett has given his services (unpaid) voluntarily. He has agreed to and it was proposed he be appointed our Independent Examiner for the coming year.

Proposed by Michele McNamara

Seconded by Liz Laverick

11 County Commissioner

He was unable to attend last year as our AGM clashed with another District meeting. He said that 25 years' ago he was in a Unit in Carshalton and found that Scouting made such a difference to his life. Now the country is in a triple dip recession, unemployment is high but in 25 years' time we hope things will be a bit different with thanks to our Leaders.

He knows Joe was disappointed our Census figures showed a slight drop but we show a very good Explorer numbers which has come from seeds planted over the last two years and this shows promise for the future.

The County Executive has just appointed a full time person on a three year contract to help enrol more adults into Scouting.

He had attended our Key Managers meeting lately and had been made very welcome. He said that our District was positive in incentives in pulling together for our youngsters in Scouting.

In conclusion Ian thanked the Leaders for the work they did and thanked Joe for his work in our District.

Dave Christmas gave a vote of thanks to Ian Newbery for his kind words to us.

12 Presentation of Awards

The following were presented:

20 Years' Service Angela Maher

30 Years' Service Andrew Edmonds, District Chairman

50 Years' Service Jim Anning, SASU

Bar to the Silver Acorn John Smith

13 Any Other Business

There being no further business Andy closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and also thanked Catriona and Angela Maher for providing the refreshments, to Andrew Hayward, 1st Lower Morden and the SASU for their help.

Dave Christmas gave a vote of thanks to Joe for the work he does for our District.

A light buffet and refreshments concluded the meeting.

Chairman's Report May 2013 – April 2014: Andy Edmonds

Let me start my Report (at the risk of offending anyone I don't name); by saying "thank you" to all who served on the District Executive Committee and:

Our financial team: Jackie Lyon in her first year as Treasurer, Keith Angliss and Ted Aslett, our examiner; who have delivered the Accounts and examined them in time for this year's AGM. Keith has provided invaluable support and guidance to Jackie.

To our Secretary Muriel Treagust for her hard work in trying to make sense of ramblings at Exec meetings and then writing up the Minutes and for the monumental task of completing the Annual Census.

To Peter Newman and Joan Burgess who have run the Appointments Sub Committee with skill and efficiency. Joan relinquished her role as Appointments Secretary on 1st March and thanks go to Muriel Treagust who has agreed to take on this additional role.

Joan took the decision to stand down before last year's AGM and we are very grateful that she agreed to "hold the reigns" until this year. Joan has served Scouting in Merton in a number of roles for many decades and we wish her all the best for the future.

To Alan Green and his team for their work at Morden Hall DHQ, to Brian Whalebone as Store Manager and Quartermaster, to Lesley Bixby as Badge Secretary, Awards Co-ordinator and "Links" Editor; and to Paul Atkins for making our web site the font of information it has become and for updating our records in anticipation of "Project Compass".

To Rob Brumwell and Peter Treagust for overseeing our main source of income; being the Hall, Flat and garages at Kenneth Black Hall. Thanks also to Paul Wilkins for advice on the electrics in the building.

To Jim Anning who came forward after the AGM last year and has served as our Representative on the County Executive.

To Dave Gould and the SAS who help out with grass cutting at Morden Hall DHQ and looking after the Mary White Memorial Garden. Also for the catering at our AGM.

To Dave Christmas for his help with risk assessments and David Williams for legal advice.

A final big "thank you" on behalf of us all to Joe; our District Commissioner, who gives greatly of his time and from my viewpoint: fantastic drive and inspiration! I am just sorry that my job pressures have meant that the support I can offer to Joe has been much reduced over the last 18 months.

In my last Report I mentioned the health of Richard Mainwaring. The improvement in his condition since the summer has been breath taking and I

know those who have worked with Richard and Josie at Group, District and County level over the last three decades will wish them well in their retirement and house move to be nearer family.

The developer at the former 36th Mitcham / Rowan School site has applied to LB Merton to amend the previous agreement to build “a Scout / Community Hall to include £100,000 to fit out”. They are trying to go back to the previous plan to now build to "shell and core". I have again told the Council that the Executive feels it is inappropriate for any Scouting monies to be used for a purpose other than to benefit Scouting. In any event, we don't currently have any Group in the District interested in the facility, nor anyone with the time on a week day to join in new discussions. The County have been offered the chance to review what is available; otherwise to see if any Group in Streatham or Norbury might be interested.

Throughout the year, I have tried to keep everyone abreast of developments through my Reports in “Links” and our over-riding priority has been to support the District via the District Development Plan.

Anyway, this concludes my 4th year as Chairman and thanks to the Team around me; the Executive has very much moved from the “Forming” to the “Norming” Phase. The Executive has sought to lessen the direct costs to our Members. This has resulted in the District Levy being abolished; 100% of all profits from the Store being returned to Groups and no charges for the use of Morden Hall DHQ.

The District Plan is financed this year to the extent of £18900. This includes £4800 for Explorers, £2000 for core Scout training, £1000 for Training Equipment and £7000 returnable to Groups for Wood Badge holders. An additional £1900 is allocated for compulsory Leader training.

Alan Green has prepared a very professional Business Plan for Morden Hall DHQ and essential repairs are also financed to the extent of £9000. Alan's plans for Morden Hall DHQ re-fit have been partially delayed due to availability of help with the planned works

The DC and I are both aware that some elements of this first DDP have not worked as we had hoped. The next DDP to incorporate “Vision 2014 - 2018”; will take on board these lessons, the District's financial position and the launch of the County Plan at its AGM on 11th June.

Kenneth Black Hall is the key to all these Plans, in that rental income from the site now totals £30400 per annum. We will have two garages to let commercially once the 19th Wimbledon is able to move into their new headquarters building.

We have also been delighted to support Groups in bringing their HQ's up to modern standards via the “Atlasta Loan” Scheme. The 6/12th Mitcham has been supported to the extent of £12000, 8th Morden £10000 and 19th Wimbledon £50000. These monies will allow Groups to bring forward modernisation plans; that will then effectively become self-financing by making their HQs more attractive for outside rentals.

Announcements are now beginning to filter out from Headquarters about the availability of future training for Executive Members. My understanding is that this will be at District level and more information will be provided once the proposed training has been “road tested”. I might even oversee the training provision myself, time will tell!

Because of my work pressures, I have often discussed standing down with Joe. However, Scouting is “in my blood” and I am happy to continue to support the District in its exciting plans, albeit perhaps not as much as I would like, but that’s the balance we all have to make!

District Commissioner's Report May 2013 – April 2014: Joe Rogerson

The recent Census about which you will have read in Links recently was not the success that we had all hoped that it would be given the rise in numbers recorded at the interim census in September 2013. The overall fall of 2.5%, of course, masked improvements in some Groups and Units, which merely underlines the fact that statistics must be looked at carefully in order that a true picture may be gleaned. From this picture, however, must be identified those areas on which we need to focus whether at District, Group or Section/Unit level. These foci necessarily fall into two main groups: Firstly, areas where there are falling numbers over time and, secondly, areas where we cannot meet demand. In both, we have to continue to look at the facts and the context before then taking the necessary action. This cycle of review, evaluate, plan and act which is to be found in each development plan, be it District, Group or Unit, enables us to deal with these challenges as part of “what we do” and, all things being equal, we will see the benefits in due time.

The last year has seen us provide successful scouting skills training to both leaders and scouts together with the beginning of our “roll out” of the mandatory safety training of adults, in which we have successfully included explorer scouts, and which will continue over the course of the next three years. These, together with a well delivered woodbadge training scheme and a variety of programme support activities have been of great benefit to our scouts. I should like to record my grateful thanks to the many adults, far too numerous to mention, who have both provided and attended this training/these activities as this commitment is what makes us the vibrant District that we are.

In terms of infrastructure, the work of the Executive continues to be immense, particularly in the areas of finance and asset management. The members’ hard work in putting the District on a solid financial footing, in particular, means that we are now in the enviable position of being able to divert more of our money to help improve scouting at the grassroots and this will be reflected in our next District Development Plan.

That we still have challenges to face, be it at Section, Group or District level, is self-evident, as we operate in a challenging world of economic uncertainty and societal change. What we can be sure of, however, is that we are making great strides in equipping ourselves to meet those challenges because we are blessed with so many adults across the District who are prepared to give freely of their time for the benefit of our youth members.

ADC Beavers Report May 2013 - April 2014: John Tweedley

As you must all know by now, I took over the role of ADC Beavers from Andrew Hayward in September last year, although Andrew handed the position over to me on his last event at the District Sports Day in July, and presented me with a Beaver scarf. I would like on the behalf of the Beavers and Beaver Leaders to thank Andrew for all the work he carried out as ADC.

Andrew organised a district outing to Gilwell Park to the Beaver & Cub Fun Day in June last year. We had 4 coaches full of Beavers and Leaders/adults. When we arrived we wondered why it took so long to get into Gilwell? Nicky Andrew's wife and Beaver leader had a frantic phone call from him saying he needed help signing in as he had to write everyone's name on a fun day pass. Some 200 odd names! We all agreed that Gilwell should have sent out the passes when Andrew registered the numbers coming on the day. However when we finally got in everyone had a brilliant time.

The Beavers attended last year's sports day at Wimbledon Arena for the first time in many years. The Beavers had fun and the afternoon ended with everyone cooling off by getting soaked. Having reviewed last year's event, we will make some changes to the format this year.

In July I attended my first Beaver Leaders meeting as a guest, but ended up chairing the meeting as Andrew was unable to attend due to work commitments. The weather was so good that it was the first time that the district beaver leaders meeting was held outside in the grounds of DHQ and if we are lucky with the weather this summer we may be able to hold our July and September meetings outside this year too.

The Beavers ran another successful bike and scooter ride through Morden Hall Park in September due to it being cancelled earlier in the year due to bad weather. This was my first event and I would like to thank all the Beaver Leaders and parents who helped to marshal the route, and ran games and the SAS who helped out with drinks on the day. The Beavers raised £124.00 and this was donated to the National Trust to help with some of the upkeep of Morden Hall Park.

On 23rd November 15 colonies (some 182 Beavers, 16 Cubs, 63 Leaders, Adults, Explorers and young leaders) in 5 full coaches descended on the RAF Museum at Hendon. The outing was to look at the exhibits and to do the Air Activities Badge. I must say that all the Beavers and Cubs were very well behaved and were a credit to the District, well done Beavers.

I have managed to visit 9 out of the 18 Beaver Colonies so far and hope to get to visit the others by the end of this year. I must say that I have really enjoyed my visits and it is interesting to see how different colonies start and end their meetings. I have also been impressed with the different activities and how the Beavers enjoy themselves at these meetings, well done Beaver Leaders & Helpers.

It would be nice to see more representatives from Beaver colonies at our district meetings, this is the time to have your say and input into what the Beavers do, and you might pick up some ideas as well.

My thanks go out to Tracy Sterlini, Julia Doolan and Clare Tweedley who have agreed to be my DBSLs and my special thanks to Linda Vaudrey who has agreed to carry on as scribe to our meetings, (although she writes in shorthand and I have no idea what she is putting down!).

Lastly I would like to thank all Beaver Leaders, assistants, helpers and parents as without their help colonies would not run.

ADC Cubs Report May 2013 – April 2014: Michèle McNamara

My ambition from last year to get more packs involved in District events wasn't as successful as I would have liked, however we have had a couple of packs joining us for the first time at different events.

In March we descended once again on Frylands Wood for our Adventure Day – 69 cubs attended and had a great time. Thanks to Mia Patterson, Martin Neal & Bill Smith for organising. Must also thank all the other adults and leaders without whom the event couldn't take place, including the contingent from the scout section who provided the aerial runway once again.

May saw us once again at Raynes Park High School for our 7 aside football competition, we had a total entry of 13 teams, which wasn't many considering the number of packs we have. There was a little problem with a double booking at the start of the day but thanks to the generosity of the other people involved we managed to stage the matches. Thanks to all the cubs, leaders & parents for a good competition and the 23rd Mitcham for keeping us all fed and watered. Winners of this event were the 22nd Wimbledon with the 16th Morden & 11th Mitcham coming 2nd & 3rd respectively.

We had a bumper turnout for the athletes badge testing night at the David Weir centre in Sutton in June, 143 cubs tried for their badges and most went home with at least one badge if not two. It was a beautiful evening thankfully and the leaders were kept busy right to the end testing them at each of the disciplines required.

November and we were at the 22nd Wimbledon HQ. as the cubs undertook the handicraft competition. The theme this year was Doctor Who, which some of the cubs had trouble interpreting. The pencil case caused us a few problems but I think they were all proud of their achievement in making something so useful. This year our stalwart of the handicraft Colin Pullen was unable to help with the preparation of the "wooden" item. I have to therefore say a really big thank you to Alan Green & Peter Treagust for responding to my appeal and spending a lot of their precious time getting this item ready and especially to Peter who attended on the day itself as well. Bill Smith once again helped with organising the junk modelling section and all the other leaders involved played an invaluable part in the running of the event. Special thanks to Muriel Treagust and Joan Burgess for judging the event and the 22nd for the use of their H.Q. Congratulations to the 19th Wimbledon Oakwood for winning the event.

1st Lower Morden HQ hosted this year's badge day –Scientist-. We had a very large number of cubs taking part- 149, one more than last year, with most of them attending in the morning the afternoon was a little more peaceful. They had a varied choice of bases at which they learnt about various scientific facts, taking home various items, from cress heads to periscopes and many more wonderful experiments. Many thanks again to all the cub leaders (and the leaders from other sections who lent a hand) who spent a very tiring day making sure the cubs had a fun time, whilst they learnt.

2014 - Our last district event was the chess competition. We had 12 teams enter this event and as the 19th Wimbledon H.Q. is being re-developed we moved the event to 1st Lower Morden. It was a very peaceful and sunny afternoon and the cubs concentrated very hard on the games to be played. Those adults who could play chess were once again busy judging the games and a parent from the 23rd Wimbledon once again had to step in when we were one player short in one team due to illness. Thanks to Mark Steed for organising, especially as he had only returned from a holiday late the night before. Congratulations to the 22nd Wimbledon for winning the event.

Finally we decided to try and run the district quiz again this year to obtain teams to go through to the county event, which was eventually on the same day as the chess competition. We only had 5 packs enter, although some had 2 teams, the 1st Wimbledon claimed both 1st & 2nd place with the 11th Mitcham close behind in 3rd place. One team from the 1st and one from the 11th went on to represent the district at the county event and congratulations to the 1st Wimbledon who won the county event! The first time we have got anywhere near the top of the table, the 11th also did us proud by coming 5th, thanks to the leaders who accompanied the teams.

The provision of Pack programmes continues to improve and I have to say that during any of my visits to packs, all the cubs are having a great time, so who could ask for more? It remains important that I receive prompt replies regarding competitions and events, whether entries are to be forthcoming or not, as this helps us to continue to organise the quality events that the cubs deserve.

If I have forgotten anyone in my thank-yous, apologies, my brain isn't what it was! Thanks to all the leaders throughout the district for their continued efforts with the cubs, be it at pack meetings, camps or district events, just remember to have fun and follow P.O.R.

Finally special thanks to Graham Fairclough, Martin Neal & Mia Patterson for continuing to support the district and myself at all times.

ADC Scouts Report May 2013 – April 2014: Dave Bixby

Last year I reported that we were seeing the start of a series of leadership changes in Troops across the District, mainly due to natural progression. This process is still ongoing with some of the new teams still shaking out. At the moment we have approximately 50% of Troops facing various challenges, from restrictive premises, to finding sufficient help, to struggling to deliver effective programmes. I probably receive programmes from about one third of Troops. Some are very good and the success of the Troop is self-evident, but it is hard to reconcile a proportion of the programmes with what we see occurring.

Our overall numbers are slightly down this year but still represent an increase of 47% since 2007 with the proportion of girls doubled up from 9.4% to 19.7%. One benefit of this increase in Scout numbers can be measured in the number of Explorer Units created in that time. The slight problem this causes is that the Leadership teams for some of the Units have come from splitting the Troop Leaders or, in some cases, the actual Scout Leaders also becoming ESL. This was fine in the beginning, but as the Units become more established the workload of those Scout Leaders is becoming untenable.

Our District Scout Section team has been visiting several Troops facing challenges to assess what help we can give but some leaders, whilst acknowledging they are struggling, seem reluctant to accept assistance. We are here to help and although it is not our role to run a Group's section long term, we will help in any way we can.

Despite the foregoing, we have seen another year of very successful activities. We try to run as wide a range of events as possible to supplement a Troop's programmes. With older Scouts' training camps, the incident hike, 5-a-side football, canal boating, rafting, quiz night and indoors sky diving there should be something for everyone, although participation in these events is in no way compulsory.

My sincerest thanks go to all the Leaders who help make all these events a success, but special thanks must go to Tim Kerridge, Alan Green and Gary Baker for running these events and providing hands on support for various Troops.

Our District certainly punches well above its weight with regard to County events. 10 of the 22 teams entered in the Cooking Competition were from Wimbledon and Wandle and 8 teams out of 25 in the County Night Exercise were from our Troops. There was also a team of Explorers having a go to gain experience. Tim Kerridge, who is the main organiser of these County events, told me that without Leaders from Wimbledon and Wandle these events would not happen.

For the future we have a bush-craft training week-end at Broadstone Warren, we have moved our canal boat experience to September and we will be trying out a new narrow boat.

We are looking forward to working with Troops to overcome their prevailing problems so that we can all continue to move forward.

I would like to welcome Richard Frewin to our team. He is keen to share his extensive experience whilst continuing his role as SL at the 11th Mitcham.

Finally, my very grateful thanks must go to Lesley who beavers away for the benefit of the Scout section, doing all sorts of jobs that most Troops are not even aware of and allows me to come out and play the game.

DESC Report May 2013 – April 2014: Paul Henderson

The Explorer Scout section within the District continues to grow with the addition of one new unit and potential for another one to start. The Explorer Scout numbers in the District remain strong and there has been a huge amount of effort and work carried out by the Unit leaders and their assistants to enable our young members to take advantage of the opportunities that are open to them. I would like to thank all the leaders and helpers who have helped make the Wimbledon & Wandle District one of the strongest Explorer sections in the County.

In addition to the leaders providing a challenging and relevant weekly programme, the District Explorer team with the help of the Unit leaders has provided activities and events open to all the Units. This began in September with our inaugural Wimbledon and Wandle night hike in the Surrey hills, with a 'sleepover' at the West Barnes Unit HQ and then a watersports day at Wimbledon Park. We had a good number of Units attend with members enjoying raft building and canoeing. This was followed up by an Explorer Scout mountaineering weekend taking place at Bethesda, the GLSW base in North Wales, where we had a good turnout and a lot of fun had by the Explorers.

The first main Explorer event of the new year was Operation Red Flare in March. We had 3 teams enter this year; it is a challenging incident night hike with points being awarded for not just being the fastest! Unfortunately we had no winners or placers this year. However, there is always next year!

By the time that you read this report the Explorer Units will have completed their training and actual expeditions for their Platinum and Diamond awards. These were undertaken during March and April in the North Downs, South Downs and New Forest. Some of our members were also doubling up these training and actual expeditions to fulfil part of their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver. Other weekend events the Units have been taking part in are Gilwell 24, fishing weekends, backwoods camping weekends and more mountaineering weekends!

We had many expeditions take place over the summer in 2013 to a variety of destinations. The Wimbledon (Edge Hill) Unit made their bi-annual pilgrimage abroad and this time they headed back to Nepal. They assisted in renovation and building work in a village where they were fully integrated in to the local

community. They also spent time trekking in the mountains and exploring all that Nepal has to offer. Meanwhile, the Flying Penguins Unit ventured to Switzerland where they took part in a variety of different activities including rock climbing, white water rafting and mountaineering. Other Units went on a backwoods summer expedition and some held joint camps with their Scout troops.

Looking forward, there are some Explorer Scouts undertaking their Explorer Belt expedition in Sweden this summer, there are some who are scheduled to attend the World Jamboree in Japan in 2015 who are busily fund raising and attending training weekends and there are those who are planning on attending Japan Camp 2015 in this country. We also plan to put on the night hike this autumn, as well as returning to Bethesda for more mountaineering exploits.

Hopefully, you can see from this very short narrative that the Explorer Scout section within Wimbledon and Wandle is very active, offering a multitude of opportunities for the young people of Merton. We have seen the number of Explorer Scouts and Units grow over the years and the sections continued success is down to the Unit leaders and their assistants. I would once again like to thank them for their hard work. I would also like to thank the Wimbledon & Wandle District executive who has been instrumental in supporting the ambition of the leaders and their members. They have fully supported the work we have been doing and ensuring that all the opportunities we are able to offer are available to one and all.

Sadly Paul Henderson has stepped back from the role of District Explorer Scout Commissioner. Paul has spent many years putting systems in place and shaping the Explorer Scout section, responding to the ever changing requirements from HQ, County and District. Linked to the fact that the role has also grown from the initial 5 units to include all the new units that have started in recent year

Paul's job has taken him abroad more than ever and he and Claire are expecting their second child in May of this year. We all know that family and work life must be put before scouting to ensure the correct life balance.

These demands mean that he is unable to respond as rapidly to his scout role as he would wish to do. He believes that it is time for a fresh leader to take the District Explorer Scouts forward.

Paul and I have worked together for many, many years, so I will not be letting him go. He wishes to still be involved with the Explorer and Network sections so we will be discussing the best way to use his time and skills in the future.

I would like to record my personal thanks to Paul and his family for all he has done for Scouting and hope that we will be in the hills again soon!

Please refer to myself for all Explorer and Network items for the time being.

Neil McLauchlan (DDC 14-25)

District SASU Report May 2013–April 2014: Robert Brumwell

Over the last twelve months we have been pleased to assist the District in various ways from acting as stewards at St George's Day to assisting at Sports Day and the Swimming Gala. We also provided the catering for the County AGM and assisted at the District AGM.

Our members were also in attendance at the Core Skills Day and were pleased to assist at short notice a Group who were short of helpers at their Barbeque.

Our members also carry out various administrative tasks for the district.

In addition to our service side we have had a full social side with theatre trips a visit to a national trust property, summer and New Year meals and social evenings at DHQ.

This year we will be continuing with both our service side and also have some interesting social activities planned.

To enable us to continue and improve our service to the District we need additional members who can take an active part in helping the District.

If anybody would like to join us or knows of somebody who would like to take part in Scouting but cannot give a full time commitment please contact Dave on 07768 381 809.

We only ask that you help occasionally throughout the year.

Morden Hall Park DHQ Report May 2013–April 2014: Alan Green

It's been a busy year and it's pleasing to see more leaders booking the HQ for use by their sections.

A lot of time has been spent on upgrading the grounds to make them more suitable for outside activities. All the residual rubbish has now been removed from the site; the internal 'paddock' fence has also been removed to give a larger area for games. The National Trust has carried out work to maintain tree safety which means we have plenty of wood for fires and some new log seats. This work will continue in 2014.

The external handrails have been modified to provide more assistance to anyone needing it. The ramp door now has an external handle to improve access.

The missing roof truss has been replaced and the ceiling reinstated, thus improving the look of the hall.

Looking forward, new lightweight folding tables have been ordered. The internal fences are being replaced and, after all the tree and fence work, the grass will be improved. Work will continue dealing with the structural problems while ensuring the HQ is still available for use. If anybody has any suggestions to make it better for sections to use please have a word with me.

Finally, a big thank you to everybody who gives up their time to work at the DHQ, as without this help the improvement would take so much longer.

District Store Report May 2013–April 2014: Brian Whalebone (Manager)/Bernie Pike (Treasurer)

Turnover for the past financial year 2013 is significantly lower than the previous year, but 2012 was exceptional, with the starting up of a new group and all the sales that this generated. This lower turnover is reflected in the drop in profits from £3,457 in 2012 to £1,503 in 2013. Gross profit margins and profit as a percentage of sales remain consistent, however, at 22% and 20% respectively.

The bank balance at the end of the year again was significantly lower than the previous year and this was a reflection of the Executive's decision that the whole of the profits from the Store should be returned to the Groups by way of the profit share scheme instead of the District retaining 20%.

Last year approximately £3,500 was returned to the groups through this scheme

On the subject of Profit share there are still some Groups that do not pay in the cheques that they receive on time. Payment was made to Groups at the end of August and at the end of the financial year there was still an amount of £733 not cleared with one group still holding a cheque for £423 and at the time of writing this report there is still one outstanding cheque to be cleared of £52. This may well be a good time to consider direct payment through the BACs system.

On Line ordering from Scout Shops still has some minor problems, but on the whole is working successfully.

Finally our thanks go to the Groups for supporting the Store, with a reminder to all Groups and Sections to send your parents to the Scout Store to buy their uniforms, as the more purchases attributed to a Group the more you get back at the end of the year. Our thanks to Lesley who steps in when difficulties arise and we look forward to another successful year.