

Wimbledon & Wandle District Scout Council

Annual Report May 2010 – April 2011

Chairman: Andy Edmonds

As I write this Report on a sunny day in April, it is still not a year since the DC phoned me and asked: "If I wanted a suit job?" My predecessor wrote last year that "2010–11 will be a challenging year for all concerned"; so how have we done?

With no previous experience as a Group Administrator or at a District level; the last 12 months have been a very steep learning curve. However, there is a raft of help and information available out there and I have had tremendous support from those around me. In the past, I had not appreciated how much goes on "behind the scenes" in the District, from a hard working and willing band of volunteers; who pull out all the stops to help those "at the Sharp End"!

So, at the risk of offending anyone I don't name; may I welcome Rich Nicol as Treasurer, say "thank you" to the rest of our financial team: John Young, Keith Angliss and Ted Aslett, our auditor; who have had two year's accounts to do in less than 12 months!

Thanks to Muriel Treagust for her hard work trying to make sense of my ramblings at Exec meetings and then writing up the Minutes and for the very arduous task of the Annual Census!

A big "thank you" to everyone who has served on the District Executive Committee and its' Sub Committee and for the work that you all do behind the scenes in other roles! Your support and guidance has been invaluable and I think we can all be proud of the way we have turned things around this year.

Thanks to Cliff Condon and his team for their work at Morden Hall DHQ, to Brian Whalebone as Store Manager and Quartermaster and Lesley Bixby as Badge Secretary and "Links" Editor; to Paul Atkins for making our web site the font of information it has become!

Okay, so what have we been up to? Might be easier to say what hasn't been done! I have tried to keep everyone abreast of developments through my Reports in "Links", but for the record:

Lease for Morden Hall DHQ now signed and sealed; meeting to be arranged with Executive Member for Planning at LB Merton re storage unit at DHQ and Rowan School site; review of flat at Kenneth Black Hall; Rent increase for Bridge Club; 20th Mitcham's HQ and equipment; Insurance and Asset review; Atlasta Fund established; support for District Canoe Club and funding to facilitate site clearance at Paches.

This has been a year of change and the only stones that have been left unturned are those that seem to work fine without me poking my nose in. So "thank you" to those I haven't had to bother too much!

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!

The year has culminated in the launch of our District Plan which is accompanied by a rolling 4 year Financial Plan. This should enable us to look outwards and to the future, so that **events are something we plan for and shape, rather than happen when we are not looking!**

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District Commissioner: Joe Rogerson

As we would all expect, Wimbledon and Wandle has had another exciting, action-packed year!

The outstanding work of our Leaders has enabled Scouts to travel all over the UK; to visit Kandersteg; to do crucial aid work in Nepal; to experience camping in all its forms at a variety of sites and events; to enjoy a wide variety of excellent District and County activities and, of course, to benefit from quality Scouting week in week out in their Group and Units.

The appointment of a dynamic, hardworking District Chairman in Andy Edmonds has led to an enormous amount being done by him and our committed Executive team. They are working very hard to ensure that our District becomes daily more efficient and more effective so that more support and more resources become available to leadership teams at the "sharp end".

The key development of the last year has to be the provision of the District Plan, which encompasses all the efforts to be made by everyone within the District from the youngest Young Leader to the oldest adult Member. It gives us the parameters within which we can strive, as one, to provide ever improving Scouting for all in Merton.

It would be remiss, however, not to remark upon the sad closure of the 20th Mitcham last December after such an illustrious history of service to the community in Mitcham. We must ensure that we all learn from this painful experience such that it is not repeated.

If I were forced to choose just two highlights from the many in 2010, they would have to be the 14 scouts of the Wimbledon Explorer Unit achieving their Queen's Scout Award and the more than 60 Scouts held in thrall by Bear Grylls as he demonstrated to them the oft ignored skill of rabbit skinning!

ADC Beavers: Andrew Hayward

When I attended last year's AGM, little did I know that I would be writing a sectional report for this year's AGM! To be asked by Joe to become ADC Beavers was a bit of a shock to say the least but it's a role that I am enjoying and looking forward to develop over the next year and beyond.

Firstly, I would like to thank Kevin Quigley for all that he has done as my predecessor and also the District Beaver Scout Leaders (Claire Tweedley, Julia Doohan, and David Williams) and the Committee for their hard work too. With my team and the Beaver Leaders around the district, I will continue his good work and we will take the section forward doing new and exiting things and making sure that our young people have a great time in the Beaver section.

Events that took place in the last 12 months were the annual Beaver Activity Day at the 1st Lower Morden's HQ in November. A great time was had by all, where they visited fun and challenging bases and where they learnt how to use a compass, took part in a sisal trail, made skeletons with straws, made cress heads, made a tasty sandwich and made a loud (but fun) cardboard "banger"! The day was rounded off with a campfire led by Maggie Pooley. A big thank you to all those who organised the event and ran the various bases.

The year was rounded off by the annual leaders' meal where a good time was had by all.

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To celebrate 2011 and our 25th birthday, events planned for this year include a District Outing to the RAF Museum at Hendon, as well a cycle/scooter ride in conjunction with our birthday party in the park. It is also hoped that there will be a Sports Day for the Beavers – either as a stand-alone event at a local venue or with the Cubs & Scouts at the District Sports in Wimbledon Park.

Over the next 18 months or so I aim to put on a District Beaver Sleepover that will be open to all but primarily to assist those colonies whose leader's don't yet have the qualifications to lead a sleepover or don't have the opportunity to run an event at Group level.

In finishing I would like to thank the Beaver Leaders and their helpers for their support, enthusiasm, patience and positivity. As a section we are moving forward, developing new and exciting ideas, programmes and events ensuring that our members have a great time as a Beaver, making friends and having fun!

ADC Cub Scouts - Michèle McNamara

As usual we have run many varied activities for the cubs within the district and those who have attended seemed to have had a good time.

We returned to Frylands wood in March 2010 for our annual adventure day, organised by Mia Patterson, Martin Neal & Bill Smith. Many thanks to them for continuing to do this. 100 cubs aged 9½ or over attended this year and tried out some new activities including tree climbing and zip wire. Thanks also to all the leaders who helped run the bases or acted as tutors.

In May we held the 7 aside football competition, at Raynes Park High School. As I said at the following CSL meeting this has to be one of the friendliest football competitions we have held. The weather was scorching and we had to reduce the times of the matches to avoid the cubs getting overheated! Thanks to all the referees, managers, players and the 23rd Mitcham for their much needed refreshments. Winners were the 5th Morden with the 13th Wimbledon being the runners up.

Come November and we had the handicraft completion held at the 22nd Wimbledon H.Q. The theme this year was magic! They made money printing machines and magic wallets and a group model. As I was away at the final planning stage, I was not privy until the day, to the special currency printed by Graham Fairclough and approved by all the others. I'm not sure what the parents made of bank notes with images of me and Joe Rogerson on them. Winners were the 23rd Mitcham. Our thanks to Muriel Treagust & John Young for being our judges once again and to Colin Pullen & Val Watson for designing the 2 main items made.

In January we held our Scientist badge day and 170 cubs attended - a record even for us. It was a little hectic at times but the cubs learnt a great deal whilst having a good time and were fully occupied for the 3 hours that they were there. Once again thanks to all the leaders who provided such good bases, especially those not normally connected with the cub section and for being so patient with all those who were there,

In February we held our inaugural chess competition. Only 7 teams entered this year but they all seemed to be enjoying it. (One of our quieter competitions.) Hopefully next year we will have a few more teams now that they know they don't have to be grand masters to enter. Thanks to Mark Steel for organising and running the event and to the 19th Wimbledon Oakwood for hosting it.

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Finally in March we took 3 teams to the county quiz at 1st Hook H.Q. Unfortunately none of our teams won but they all had an interesting afternoon, especially dressing a member of their team as a royal bride! I am still not convinced that a quiz where the answers are not given is a good idea but I seem to be in the minority in the county. The district round was not well attended and this may be due to the day of the week on which it was held, we shall look at this for next year, if this event goes ahead again.

In June 45 cubs and beavers from our district will attend a county fun day at Walton Firs. We had a very poor response to this even mainly I think due to the cost.

Once again I have been asked this year to obtain pack numbers for the mini census the county require. This should be a simple exercise, it is not. May I ask you therefore this year to let me have the information a.s.a.p. It is not being used for any sinister purpose and it does help me to know where problems may be occurring.

The District Cub Scout leaders and I have planned our pack visits for the following term and this is one of the reasons why it is important for us to have your programme for the term. It is most frustrating to turn up for a visit only to find that you are out visiting some venue or other.

Finally personally, I should like to thank Mia, Martin & Graham for all their good advice, help and support throughout the year and we look forward to the next year being just as busy.

ADC Scouts: Dave Bixby

What a busy year we have had!

Not only did we have our biennial survival skills weekend, we also managed to squeeze in a go at narrow boating on the Grand Union Canal. The idea behind the canal boating experience was to give Troops an opportunity to try an activity that perhaps they had not considered or thought too difficult because they lacked experience. Everyone who took part seemed to have a great time and there was no hesitation about including it again in this year's calendar.



The highlight of the past year has to be the Survival Skills weekend at Paches. It was a trifle damp but the visit from Bear Grylls, Chief Scout, more than made up for the weather. Special thanks must go to Gary Baker and the guys from the 23rd Mitcham who organised this on our behalf, especially as we had a few Leaders from other Groups drop out at the last minute, leaving us short-handed.

I am sure that the Scouts who took part will have special memories of the weekend for years to come.

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Our 5-a-side football – also organised by Gary and Co – saw a change of venue and time and resulted in one of the largest entries ever. I think we will be visiting the Hub again.

We are getting good participation at all of our District events, given that most Troops are also running very active programmes in their own right as well. Sadly, some of those that we don't see aren't doing much on their own either! Those that do come really seem to enjoy themselves whether it is the raft race, camping assessment, quiz, handball, incident hike: it's great for the Scouts to meet other Scouts from different Troops and a good way for Leaders to offer a really varied programme.

Once again the number of Scouts is up across the District, making a slow but steady upward progress every year since 2007. As all Troops experience cycles in numbers, we are planning a series of appearances at local events to showcase the activities available in the Scout Section. The emphasis will be adjusted depending on location and the needs of local Troops. We also want to bring in some confidence boosting training sessions for the newer/younger Leaders to help them feel more part of the team and to get more fulfilment from their roles within Troops.

A great deal has been said in recent times about Scouters submitting their detailed programmes as an aid to monitoring the quality of Scouting being delivered. It amazes me how little preparation some Leaders do for their weekly meetings. Unfortunately, I often see SLs chasing around madly trying to round up the equipment for the next activity on the programme as the previous item finishes. The Section Assistants/Helpers/Young Leaders stand on the side lines awaiting instructions – not a happy situation for anyone and I'm sure we can do better.

My sincere thanks to all those who have helped organise and support the Scout Section events during the past year. As with everything, it always seems to be the same handful of people who step up to the mark and my guess is that the same people are the main players within their Groups.

It would not be possible for me to carry out my role as ADC without the support and unstinting help from Lesley. I have no idea how I would produce the Red Book, Troop Scouters' minutes or catering for various events without her and I thank her very, very much.

A few weeks ago I went to a County workshop and I was very surprised to hear ADCs from the other four Districts saying how difficult they found it and how stressful their job was. I seem to have an easy time by comparison. I feel very privileged to work with the Scout Section in Wimbledon and Wandle, where people have not lost the plot, remember why we are here and ask the question instead of complaining when they have a problem. Thank you.

Scout Trophy holders:

2010	Camping Assessment	22 nd Wimbledon
2010	Camp cooking	23 rd Mitcham
2010	Sports	13 th Wimbledon
2010	Tug-o'-war	2 nd Morden
2010	Quiz	3 rd Mitcham and 8 th Wimbledon
2010	Swimming Gala	16 th Morden
2010	Incident hike	8 th Wimbledon
2011	Handball	6/12 th Mitcham

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2011 5-a-side football

22nd Wimbledon

County Events

Cooking competition	1 st	23 rd Mitcham A
	5 th	13 th Wimbledon A and 23 rd Mitcham B
	8 th	13 th Wimbledon B
	13 th	5 th Morden
Night Exercise	1 st	13 th Wimbledon A
	3 rd	13 th Wimbledon B
	4 th	8 th Wimbledon
	16 th	22 nd Wimbledon
	24 th	5 th Morden

ADC Band - John Smith

The band has continued to run a weekly practice and training programme throughout the year. We meet at the 8th Morden headquarters on Monday evenings from 7 to 9.30pm (during school term time) and would invite anyone who is interested to pay us a visit to find out more about becoming a band member.

Our practices are informal, and we do not usually wear uniforms. We spend part of the time providing tuition to newly recruited members, and the remainder practicing new tunes and marching routines.

In order to recruit new members we often visit pack and troop meetings, which allow us to explain about the band, and give the opportunity for the cubs and scouts to try the instruments and have a try at marching. We also find that playing at District events creates interest and often results in us gaining new members.

During the past year we have played at a number of events. In May we performed at the District AGM and in the same month at the Kingston Band Tattoo at Tolworth. In July we played at the District sports day and also lead a church parade in Woking.

As usual we have played at the St Georges Day and Remembrance Day parades, and in December we played Christmas Carols at a care home in Teddington.

We continue to seek new members, and while we are pleased when someone who are already plays an instrument wants to join us, we also welcome those who are unable to play, as we provide tuition, as well as an instrument.

If you would like us to visit one of your pack or troop meetings please contact us as we can offer something a little different from your regular activities and at the same time we may gain some new members.

To close, I would like to thank all those members and helpers who continue to provide much time and effort in supporting the band.