

# **A History of the First One Hundred Years of the Worting St Thomas Scout Troop**





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## **The First Beginnings**

The founder of scouting, Robert Baden Powell was a national hero following his defence of Mafeking in the South Africa war. Out of his childhood experiences and rich military career the scout movement was born. In the summer 1907 he held a camp on Brownsea Island for a small number of boys from different backgrounds an event which has now been recognised as the birth of the scout movement. In 1908 'Scouting for Boys', Baden Powell's hand book of scouting, was published. The scout movement swept the country driven not only by Baden Powell's incredible energy but also by the boys who quickly adopted scouting and pressed for local scout troops to be formed. In the summer of 1908 some members of the Boys Brigade in Basingstoke asked Mr Arthur Charrett if he would help them start a scout troop. He agreed and in August 1908 12 boys formed the 1<sup>st</sup> Basingstoke Troop, which was officially registered in January 1909. In June 1909 Mr Charrett, Basingstoke's first scout master, received his warrant. Mr Charrett went on to become the District Commissioner and in 1957 he received scouting's top award, the Silver Wolf, in recognition of nearly 50 years in scouting.

In 1910 Mr Goodall raised the idea of forming a scout troop in Worting. He organised a meeting at the Reading Room on July 18<sup>th</sup> 1910 to discuss the idea and an account of that meeting was reported in the Gazette.

"On Monday (July 18th) evening last a public meeting was held in the Reading Room to discuss the advisability of forming a patrol of Boy Scouts for the village. The Chair was taken by Mr S L Bullock, and he was supported on the platform by Rev E C Summers (Scout Master of St Michaels' Basingstoke patrol), Major Vigors and Mr P Goodall, while in the room were Miss Warren, Miss Archer, Mrs Bullock, Miss Summers and a large number of residents of the neighbourhood. The chairman stated that although unable to be present the following were in full sympathy with the object of the meeting and hoped that a successful issue would be evolved; Major General Sir Arthur Warren K C B, Rev A H Gay, Colonel Heath, Colonel G I May and Sir William Knox".

After a display of scouting skills by scouts from the Basingstoke troop the debate was started. "The Chairman first put before the meeting the proposed order of business, viz, to hear from the Rev E C Summers particulars of the inception and the working of the Boy Scouts movement, and then elect a small committee to discuss which body of scouts they would join, and arrange the necessary details". The Rev E C Summers "then gave a very lucid exposition of the duties and responsibilities of a scout....., the one prevailing idea was true citizenship. .... The training was to develop the physical, mental and moral powers of the members".

The meeting being convinced that a Worting scout troop would be worthwhile a committee was selected to take the idea forward. It was also suggested that Mr Goodall should be the village's first scout master. And so through the work of the committee

arrangements were made to enrol the first scouts at the Reading Rooms on the 24<sup>th</sup> November 1910. But it was a joint Worting and Wootton St Lawrence troop led by a scout master from Wootton, not Mr Goodall, who was so very nearly Worting's first scout master.

"The Chairman (Major Vigors) in his opening announcement said that it had been arranged to combine Worting and Wootton in the movement. Mr W Roberts-Thomson of Upper Wootton Farm had kindly consented to act as Scout Master. It was proposed to start with a patrol in each village and it was hoped that when these were effective others would be able to be added. Arrangements had been made for the Scout Master to visit Worting on the third Thursday in each month and the patrol would go to Wootton to join the Wootton patrol on the first Thursday in each month, and on the intermediate Thursday instruction would be given either in the School Room or the Reading Room during the winter by Major Vigors, Mrs Bullock or others interested in the movement. After the six to form the patrol had been chosen, the chairman briefly but lucidly explained the objectives of the movement, read the rules and afterwards presented each with a copy. At that conclusion Mr Benwell proposed a very hearty vote of thanks to Mr Roberts-Thomson for undertaking the duties of Scout Master, and from what he knew of him, and his long varied experience in the volunteer forces, they were remarkable lucky in getting one so well fitted for the post." Those first Worting scouts were Wheeler, Hailey, Evans, Garnett, Bowerman and Oliver.

Only two weeks later on the 10 December the Worting scouts paraded with 275 scouts from the district for inspection by the Chief Scout Sir Robert Baden Powell. Major Vigors and Mrs Bullock were amongst the scouting dignitaries who greeted Sir Robert when he was met by the scouts paraded at the bottom of Station Hill. Due to bad weather the parade then moved indoors to the Corn Exchange. Baden Powell inspected the ranks, spoke to the boys, and chatted with some of the scout masters including Mr Charrett and Mr Roberts-Thomson. Following a rousing speech the scouts vigorously applauded by thumping the floor with their staves. Baden Powell then gathered the scout masters around him and thanked them, and also remarked that he had never seen so many lady scout leaders. Finally Major General Lukin called out "Scouts! Hats on staves. Three cheers for his Majesty the King" and the scouts responded "right lustily", as the paper reported.

In January 1911 there was an evening of entertainment at the school rooms to raise funds for the scouts, 'with an excellent and varied programme arranged by Mrs Bullock'. There were many local dignitaries in the audience including Mr and Mrs Bullock, and Roberts Thompson the scoutmaster as was accompanied by Mr F Brooks Assistant Scout Master. There were displays of physical drill and songs by the scouts. There were also songs by local ladies and Mrs Bullock's nephew Thomas Marker (aged 13) sang Tatters, which includes the line 'fortune little matters when hopes are high', and was rapturously

applauded. He also took part in two short plays that were also well received, one of which was about King Alfred burning the cakes. Miss Gourley dressed as a monkey and did monkey impressions whilst telling the sad tale of captivity in a zoo called 'the home sick monkey'. There was a presentation of the progress of the scout patrol and thanks offered to Major Roberts Thompson and Mr Brooks as well as to Mrs Bullock the 'energetic' secretary and Miss Bates who was to lead the scouts in rifle shooting. (Master Marker was killed only six years later at the battle of Passchendaele whilst his mother was living with her sister Mrs Bullock at Hillside)

In February 1911 the troop was expanded. "The scouts were drawn up in lines on each side of the road outside the Reading Room, under Scout Master W Roberts-Thomson and Assistant Scout Master F Brooks to receive Major Vigors, the Chairman of the committee, who on arrival made a tour of inspection. The scouts then marched inside, where a large number of parents and others interested in the movement were assembled. The chair was taken by Major Vigors". "He said how pleased he was to see such a large number present, which would encourage the committee to continue the work which had been going on for about six months. They had met together firstly to present second class badges to those who had earned them, and secondly to enrol another patrol in each parish". "Second class badges were then presented to the following. The Peewits; Patrol Leaders Wheeler and Hailey, Corporals Evans and Garnett, and Scouts Bowerman and Oliver; the Owls. Patrol Leader Digweed. Perhaps the most impressive part of the evening's programme was the enrolment of the new patrol; the three fold promise to be loyal to God and the King and to do good turns for other people, and to obey the scout laws, was made by each new member individually at the half salute. The following were enrolled:- Worthing: Reginald Rose, Earnest Pearce, William Evans and Fred Cooper".

On Easter Monday 1911, the Worthing scouts took part in an extraordinary field day which brought together all the youth movements of the town. The scenario for the day had been set out in the Gazette a few weeks earlier. "The President of Utopia having declared war upon England without previous warning has landed a large expeditionary force on the south coast.....and has over run the southern counties with mobile columns of troops". "Basingstoke has been hurriedly fortified and is held by a weak force of defenders under the command of General Incognitia who .... despatched a small column to collect supplies from the country around. This force having obtained their object are returning to Basingstoke with a convoy of food and other supplies .....the OC receives information from his scouts that the enemy are occupying a commanding position in the neighbourhood of Cliddesden and Winslade with the evident intention of attacking his convoy and capturing it." It is realised that they must cross the bridge at Hackwood Park before the enemy turns them back. "General Incognitia learning of the plan by heliograph message then signals to the OC Convoy that he will make a sortie from Basingstoke and engage the enemy in the neighbourhood of Cliddesden". The invaders

were the White force commanded by Major W Roberts-Thomson, which included the Worting and Wootton Scouts. They were identified by white armbands. The defenders were the Reds and led by Rev Summers. "All boys, whether actually armed or not, are to be considered to be armed with rifles. The umpires will be distinguished by white caps".

Not surprisingly the day was extensively reported in the newspaper. "The chief event of public interest which engaged the attention of Basingstoke people on Easter Monday was a field day for the local companies of the Church Lads Brigade, Boy Scouts, Boys Brigade, Cadets etc...". "The event was favoured by splendid weather and the lads as well as the onlookers had a most enjoyable time in the glorious sunshine and amid the sylvan beauties of Hackwood." 330 boys took part, of which 177 were scouts. The column was led by a band, there was a field gun pulled by 8 cadets, four wagons pulled by scouts and cadets and a horse drawn ambulance flying the Red Cross. "The column as a whole, as it marched buoyantly to the scene of operation, was greatly admired, and no little excitement was occasioned among the numerous spectators".

A temporary camp was established at the cricket ground and the pavilion was fitted out as a field hospital. There were some preliminary practice manoeuvres in the morning, "... and at 12.30 the lunch that had been bought in each haversack was devoured by its possessor to fortify him for the sterner work of the afternoon. At 1.30 the 'fall in' was sounded, and the whole forces moved off to the park gates, whence the Red and White combatants marched to take up their respective positions for the fight. Reds took themselves to Winslade Lodge, having with them four transport trucks, a field gun and an ambulance wagon with stretcher bearers and nurses. The battle opened at 2.30 and was waged strenuously for two hours. Red divided into three columns in the charge of the officers above mentioned. White took up a defensive position at the North West end of the park. Red's main body attacked in extended order across the park; the brigade on the right, while attempting a flanking movement, getting ultimately into difficulties resulting in their capture en bloc by a party of Whites under Captain Bainbridge of the Fleet Church Lads Brigade. The left brigade occupied themselves principally in keeping up a running fight with the enemy's right flank, who attacked them from the Spring Woods; and a rear action was fought on the left flank between a small party of Reds and their supports (consisting of two sections of the Cliddesden Boys brigade) against Whites left column, the result being that the Whites were driven off and ordered by the umpire to retire".

"The field gun section occupied two commanding positions during the fight and rendered an advance in force possible by shelling the enemy out of two strong positions. At 4.15 the charge was sounded and the Red force thereupon carried the bridge and rushed their transport over it. So ended the battle, and the rally being sounded, the combined forces marched back to camp". "Capt. The Rev T N R Griffiths called for three cheers for the chief organiser of the manoeuvres, the Rev E C Summers and to this call

the lads responded most heartily. After tea the lads enjoyed various games and at six o'clock they fell in for the return march to Church Cottage." It was a grand day out on a grand scale.

On Empire Day the Worting scouts attended a meeting at the Town Hall and the speeches shed light on the early scout movement. "The chairman thought that on the whole this scouting was the best thing in the world. They looked to this scout movement to provide the men who, if ever an emergency should arise, would be ready to take their part in the defence of the Empire. ... (and) ... that it would create and foster a spirit of patriotism and provide that knowledge and training without which patriotism was useless." General Sir William Knox "... hoped that this new movement – the finest movement of the present century – would save us from drifting into helpless indifference. He looked upon this scout movement as a rebirth of the nation. It was apt to be looked upon as a toy. It must not be so looked upon, but must have support". The Mayor mentioned in his speech that he had a friend in London who was " ... perfectly absorbed by his duties as a scout master, to which he gave up all his spare time and was all the happier for it".

In July 1911, less than a year since the Worting scouts were first enrolled, they attended the Royal Review at Windsor Great Park. "A contingent of 82 scouts and 5 scout masters (with Scout Master Roberts-Thomson in charge) from Basingstoke and district journeyed to Windsor on Tuesday to take part in the great rally reviewed by his majesty the King. The rally was a tremendous success and all those who were privileged to take part will never forget the delight they felt in being numbered with such a large muster of scouts. The Basingstoke B P Scouts have good reason to be glad they were present for they were introduced especially to the Chief Scout, Sir R S S Baden Powell, who also spoke personally to Scout Masters Roberts-Thomson and Charrett".

The event was national news and widely reported. "The boys massed in solid ranks in a vast horseshoe in the open park". The King inspected the scouts along their ranks by horse. As he got about half way round, "A sudden tornado of cheers broke out where the King was and it spread like a prairie fire all round the great concourse in a moment, so that the whole scene was a mass of cheering lads and tossing hats, their enthusiasm knew no bounds, and it was a sight that cannot fail to have impressed all who were there". To the rear were the scout masters. "Men were there of every kind – young and old, rough and smooth, high and low, rich and poor-all shoulder to shoulder in one great cause, the cause of the future generation". As the King took his place under the Royal Standard, "There was a moment's pause of dead silence, and then a sudden roar filled the air and the whole mighty horseshoe of thirty three thousand boys with one impulse leapt forward from either side, rushing as only boys can rush, gathering speed and force as they came, screaming out the rallying cries of their different patrols as they came in a whole kaleidoscope mass of colour with flags fluttering, hats waving, knees glinting, in

the great charge towards the King. Then, at a sign, the whole mass stopped its rush, up went a forest of staves and hats, and higher into the sky went the shrill screaming cheers of the boys – God save the King”. Baden Powell wrote, “That was one of the most thrilling moments of my life”.

In November the troop attended a Musical and Dramatic evening at the Drill Hall, also to witness the award of a Bronze Medal for life saving to Scout Wyn of Upton Grey. The next mention of the Worting troop in the Gazette is not until November 1912 when they attended a church service lead by the Rev Tapsfield. After the service, “The scouts then collected near the church with the Scout Masters Major Roberts-Thomson and Mr Peters. They were inspected by Major Vigors, who is their president, and Mrs. Bullock, who showed great interest in them. Then the scouts marched off to Major Roberts-Thomson’s and indulged in a hearty tea”.

It was more than a year before they come to the attention of the press again. In May 1914 there was a Scout’s Church Parade. “Last Sunday there was a parade of the Worting, Wootton, Oakley and 1<sup>st</sup> Basingstoke scouts at the parish Hall. The village troops proceeded part of the way to meet the Basingstoke troop, and they presented a very smart appearance as they marched through the village, headed by the drummers and buglers of the Basingstoke troop.” The service conducted by Rev Fitzpatrick took for its address Ecclesiastes IX 10 “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might”, and he offered them the motto, pray hard, work hard, play hard and scout hard. “After the service the whole of the scouts marched to ‘Hillside’ where they were kindly entertained for tea by Mrs Bullock and Miss Fitzpatrick, who received the warmest thanks of all present”.

In August 1914 on the very eve of the First World War the Boy Scouts of the District met at Erdesley, a large house on the Cliddesden Road, next to the present site of St Marys College. “Once again, through the generosity of Mr J E Wallis, JP, who is scout commissioner for this district, the local troops of Baden Powell scouts were entertained at Erdesley on Saturday afternoon. The Basingstoke, Oakley, Worting, Sherborne and Cliddesden troops attended, altogether about 70 lads parading. After inspection there was an afternoon of sports”.

### **Mrs Bullock of Hillside, Church lane, Worting**

It is worth taking a moment to dwell on Mrs Bullock, whose name figures highly in those early years and without whom it is by no means sure that the scout troop would have been a success. Emma Gruggon Luckcraft was born in 1861 in Derby a daughter, one of the nine children, of Captain Charles Maxwell Luckcraft of the Royal Navy and grew up in Lewes where her father was the Governor of the Naval Prison. She was 36 when she married Sidney Lauriston Bullock in 1897. By 1899 they were renting the house called Hillside up Church Lane from the Lamb family and he was a solicitor in Lamb Brooks solicitors, with Bullock being added between 1920 and 1985. It is clear that they threw

themselves into village and civic life and Mr and Mrs Bullock together and Mrs Bullock on her own are frequently mentioned in the local paper for their attendance at events and support or leadership in local organisations, of which the scouts was but one. She attended the Mothers Union and supported Conservative party events; she is named at Christmas and Harvest celebrations as well as Empire Day. It would seem that Mrs Bullock played an important role in the local Red Cross Society, recruiting locally before the war, running the West Ham House Hospital during the First World War for the Hampshire Red Cross Committee. She was also well placed within the Hampshire Committee itself and indeed represented the Committee when Lord Haig opened the Gosport War Memorial Hospital in 1926.

We know that in the early days Mrs Bullock supported the Worting scouts not only as their Secretary and supporter but also in practical ways too when they met every other week at the Reading Room, along with Major Vigors. What skills might this remarkable Edwardian matron have brought to the Boys Scouts? We can assume that first aid and cleanliness would spring directly from her Red Cross role where she instructed new local recruits in home nursing (and presumably war time nursing when the time came) . The Red Cross involvement at the sham battle at Hackwood in 1911 was under her leadership. Indeed she was the commandant of the Basingstoke Red Cross VAD contingent at the 'Base Hospital' Army manoeuvres at Fleet in July 1912 where the 'wounded', over 130 of them, were played by Boy Scouts so that the soldiery could continue with their battle field training whilst feeding the medical support a flow of wounded to test theirs. She was a leading light, and indeed a good shot, at the Worting Rifle Club where the scouts were invited from time to time to practice shooting. She was active in the local cricket club (and her brother in law was a nationally famous cricketer) and so her encouragement of that game and sports in general can be assumed. She had a singing voice and a willingness to perform and as we have seen she organised entertainment for the scouts but also she will have coached them in their entertainment skills. Whilst she periodically offered them a hearty tea at Hillside no doubt the scouts cooking skills benefitted from her tuition. Matters of behaviour, civic pride and community responsibility are certainly reflected in her many other worthy causes and we can imagine that on Empire Day, and when looking after the local poor and ill the scouts would have been encouraged to assist her and or at least follow her example. For example she was a 'lady visitor' at the work house, a role which involved not only supporting the working of the institution but being an advocate for the women and girls living there. She also organised the entertainment at Cowdery Down House, the name given to the work house to take the stigma of a poor house origin from the birth certificates issued there. She was noted as amongst the most generous contributors to the scholars fund to support the school and also contributed to the costs of the Basingstoke Cottage Hospital, and so I have no doubt that the scouts too benefit from her financial generosity. She must have been a true inspiration and was an early hero of Worting Scout Troop. She had no children of her own and must have taken great

pleasure in the young people that scouts brought her into contact with. In later life she moved to Gosport after her husband retired in 1941. He died in Gosport in 1945 and she died not long after.

## The First World War

Eighteen of the older scouts in Basingstoke district enlisted as soon as war was declared and Major Roberts-Thompson was among many Basingstoke District scout leaders who were called up. The scouts made themselves available for war work, indeed, of all the youth group volunteers, the scouts were most sought after as their training developed confidence and initiative. They were used as runners, messengers and orderlies. They assisted the public authorities, the police, the hospitals and the fire brigade. However, it was for guarding the railway bridges and patrolling the railway line that the Basingstoke scouts received their war badges. The ceremony, in May 1915, was extensively reported in the Gazette and a number of Worting scouts were honoured.

“A number of boys belonging to the Basingstoke and Worting Troops having qualified for the war service badge granted by the BP Boy Scouts Central Association, these were presented on Monday evening at the headquarters of the Basingstoke troop, May Place, by Mr F A Wallis and Mrs Bullock.....Over 40 boys, most of them in scout uniform, were present.” “Scout Master Charrett next read the Rev N R Fitzpatrick’s report on the war service performed by the Worting Troop. It stated that 13 members of this troop qualified for the War Service Badge by guarding the bridge over the main road and the smaller bridge over the Cold Harbour Road from the end of August, on their return from camp, every night from 9pm to 7am, until prevented by severe weather in November. The service was arranged and started by Scout Master Smith, but he was unable to carry it on through illness. The Rector of Worting therefore superintended it in person from early in September until the close of the service. The nights were divided into four watches, 10 to 12, 12 to 2, 2 to 4, and 4 to 6, always two scouts on guard together and no scout on guard two nights running. The guarding of these bridges was carried out in a most thorough manner. No traffic was allowed to pass unchallenged and no difficulty was experienced. The keen sight and hearing of the scouts was a great asset in their service and they have thoroughly well-earned the badges to be presented to them”.

“The Rev N R Fitzpatrick said that one of the warmest friends of the scout movement in Worting was Mrs Bullock, who carried it on before he came, and that it was as her representative that he stood here this evening. When he came to Worting the work was a little inclined to drop, but he was so interested in it that he told Mrs Bullock that he would do anything he could to keep it going. When he came back from camp he found the boys guarding the bridges. He felt that it was splendid thing that they should be doing something for their country and he bought them a new tent and waterproof sheet, and when the scout master was unable to go on he threw himself into the work with the scouts. They went on guarding the bridges until the weather was exceedingly bad and the end came in rather an amusing way, for the report got about when he set the char woman to scour the waterproof sheet that the boys were to have a damp bed,

though, as a fact, he had dried it in the Rectory harness room. However, the fear of the damp bed was so great that none of the scouts turned out that night. He then went up to the War Office and told them they must send somebody to take the place of the scouts, and since then the work of bridge guarding and patrolling had been done by the DCLI. He had done many things in his time but he never did anything more fascinating than the work of guarding these bridges. Sometimes one had to creep under a taut tent and wake a fat sleepy scout and make him turn out in the rain. He had no uniform himself, but turned out in a long coat armed with a Nyasaland assegai to make him look official (laughter). The sight of them was enough and nobody dared to pass them, although sometimes they had to challenge. He thought the scouts deserved all that could be said in their favour and he hoped the time might not be distant when the War Office might use them again."

"The Worting Scouts who earned badges were Patrol Leader Mills, Scouts Ambrose Garnett, Ted Lyons, Charlie Port, B Rampton, Henry Smith (all of whom had performed war service for three and a half months). Patrol Leader B Whyte, Scouts Jack Dale, Murray Penney, Dennis Port, Leonard Puckett, Earnest Salmon, and Arthur Woolford, these having served for a somewhat shorter period. Earnest Salmon had also acted as messenger to the West Ham Military Hospital since it was opened on December 31<sup>st</sup>".

In May 1916 a Parade was arranged at Fairfield's School at short notice, at the request of Lord Baden Powell, who was "motoring from Newbury to Winchester by way of Basingstoke". About 60 scouts were paraded at short notice. They made a large circle around the Chief Scout for inspection, and then closed in to hear him speak. He was pleased by their appearance and their badges. "I am especially glad to see so many badges of public service. Fellows out in the country do not get much chance of earning that badge, but in towns, where you can help the hospitals, the police or the fire brigade, it is a great thing to do so and I am glad to see that you have not been behind in getting these badges. I want you to go back and tell your fellow scouts who were not able to be here that I am glad to have seen you".

### **Arthur Charrett**

Arthur Charrett, Basingstoke's first scout leader, was born in Hurstbourne Tarrant on the 8th January 1879 to George James Charrett and his wife Ellen, nee Baverstock. He was their third child and had two older sisters, Ellen and Sara Rose, and would later have a younger sister called Daisy and a younger brother called Frank. George, his father, was the grandson of a wheelwright from Bishops Sutton just outside Winchester and had been a tailor, but by the time Arthur was born he was a Congregational Minister.

The family were still in Hurstbourne Tarrant two years later at the census of 1881, but by 1891 had moved to Dibden in the New Forest, residing at 31 Newtown Villas. The Charrett family then moved to Emsworth, but in the 1901 census Arthur is living in Guildford and working as an assistant in a music shop.

In 1910 Arthur, an organ and piano tuner, married Agnes Lucy Macdonald, and they were living at 6 Lyndon Villas, Bounty Road in Basingstoke, and of course by this time he was already a scout leader. He and his wife remain at this address in the 1911 census and when he enlists in the army in 1915. On the 24th March 1914 they had a son, Macdonald Arthur Charrett, who went on to become a successful and well regarded doctor.

In 1915, aged 36, he joined the Durham Light Infantry. On his short service attestation form his profession is still a piano tuner, and his height is given as 5 feet 2 inches. It seems very likely that he joined the 19th, Bantam, Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry as previously the minimum height for military service was 5 feet 3 inches. This was reduced in 1915 and at about the time Arthur signed up the DLI were forming their Bantam battalion of shorter men who now qualified in the north and when Arthur reported to the DLI at Winchester in June 1916 is when the 19th Battalion arrived at Salisbury Plain to train at Perham Down. They moved to the trenches in the Somme area and saw much hard fighting during the war.

After the war Arthur must have moved profession, because when his wife Agnes died on 27th February 1925, aged only 41, he is recorded in probate records as being a chemist assistant. This must have been when he was working at the Wote Street chemist.

In March 1934 Arthur married Gladys Cogwell Burge, who was 15 years his junior and from Cirencester. They married in Basingstoke but by the late 1930's they had moved to Horsham where Arthur ran a dispensing chemist shop at 31 East Street. His son, the doctor, is registered at this address whilst serving as a doctor in the RAF(VR) working at Park Prewett hospital in Basingstoke in 1940. Arthur is listed as a Senior Air Raid warden in Horsham in 1939.

He continued as a scout leader in Horsham where he was known as 'Pop' Charrett, and he is in a photograph on the Horsham Scouts Facebook page. It was as ADC to Horsham scouts that he was awarded his Silver Wolf. This was announced in the April 1956 edition of the Scouter magazine, and the citation states. "A Charrett A D C Horsham District, in recognition of his services of the most exceptional character in Sussex and Hampshire over a period of 47 years".

Arthur and Gladys retired to 45 St Leonard Road Horsham, where Gladys died on the 19th November 1971. Arthur died two years later, but the exact date could not be given, and the record states that he was last seen alive on the 31st of August and his dead body was found on the 1st of September.

He was 95 years old.

## **William Roberts Thomson**

William C Roberts Thomson was born in 1871 in Bournemouth, the son of John and Rowe Roberts Thomson. He was a doctor, a major in the 4th Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment. He became a prominent Bournemouth citizen, on the board of the Victoria Hospital, a County Councillor, Chairman of the BMA, chairman of the Bournemouth natural science society, and founder and chairman of the Bournemouth School. He was a freeman of the city and even today there is a Roberts Thomson Scholarship Foundation. He lived at Monkchester on Manor Road.

William served with the 2nd Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment in the Boer war, arriving with reinforcement in 1899. Their main task was to guard the slow moving supply convoys that supported the front line. On one occasion they were ambushed by a superior force of Boers. It is interesting that convoy protection, an ambush of a supply convoy, is the theme he selected for the 1911 Easter Day field exercise.

He returned to England with the Regiment in 1902 and in 1908 was gazetted as a Major in the 4th (Volunteer) Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment, of which his father was the colonel. It is clear that it was in this role he lived at The Farm Upper Wootton, and no doubt how he came to join the Hampshire Regiment for service during the First World War where he rose to be Colonel.

At some point after 1911, when the census shows he is still single, he married Rosalind Denis De Vitre, of Bournemouth. In 1921 they were living at Howe Lodge in Kinson, and by 1929 they lived at 22 Dean Park Road Bournemouth. William died in Bournemouth in January 1950 aged 78 and Rosalind in 1963 aged 88.

## Between The Wars

In 1919 peace returned and scouting is reported again for its camps, rallies and sports days. Worting's scout master survived the war and in November 1920 Lieutenant Colonel Roberts-Thomson of the 7<sup>th</sup> Hampshire Regiment unveiled the Wootton St Lawrence war memorial. But he is described in the Gazette as a 'former resident' and he did not return to Worting scouts. Whilst we cannot be sure how many Worting scouts served or where killed, we do know that Reginald Rose was a Worting Scout named on that war memorial and Reginald Digweed on the Wootton War Memorial.

In August 1921 there was Scouts rally at Herriard Park at the invitation of Major and Mrs Jervoise. Worting boys were amongst the 250 scouts and cubs that marched past Major Chute, the District Commissioner. It had been hoped that Baden Powell would be able to attend but he could not. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Salisbury Scouts were present as they were on a trek in the area. The Worting boys did well. The Under 14 One Hundred Yards race was won by Puckett of Worting, the Obstacle Race was won by Woods of Worting, and the Three Legged Race was won by Knight and Woods of Worting. Although there were troop displays the paper notes "Owing to lack of time Worting was unable to give their ambulance display". After the sports day a number of troops including Worting went on to their summer camp at Whitewood, Herriard.

1921 was a good year for Worting in the District competitions. In December they were placed in every event of the annual rally at the Drill Hall on Penrith Road. "In the gloom of the November fog last Saturday afternoon when the BP Scouts and Wolf Cubs of Basingstoke and District held their annual competitions, the young bloods of this organisation had the opportunity of showing how to keep cheerful in depressing circumstances". The Mayor was not able to attend but made up for it by 'defraying the cost of their tea'. The 5<sup>th</sup> Worting, led by Miss Batt, won the scouts message race, came third in the ambulance exercise, third in the Morse buzzer test, first in the Morse flag test, fourth in the Kings games, third in the cubs message race and third in the cubs signalling.

In June 1922 Baden Powell, attended the District rally. "On Saturday afternoon on Castle Field, ..... , there was a rally of the Boy Scouts and Cubs of the Basingstoke District to the number of nearly 200". "Although it was a delightfully sunny afternoon there was but a very small attendance of the general public, and the organisers of the rally were not a little discouraged by the lack of public support of the good work they were doing in training boys to become efficient citizens." The Worting scouts were led by Scout Master Fryer, and their stalwart, Mrs Bullock, was in attendance. The Chief Scout, who had been attending a scout rally at Froyle arrived just before 6pm. By this date Baden Powell lived at Pax Hill in Bentley, which is close by. "The scouts, who were at the moment engaged

in their fire lighting competition, retired with the Cubs to the southern boundary of the ground, whence shortly afterwards at the given signal they sprang forward and greeted their Chief Scout with the scouts yell – a wild sort of reception which the Chief prefers to anything more formal. “Carry on”, said the Chief, “I should like to see what you can do”. After various competitions they were assembled and inspected by Baden Powell. The winning troop, the Basingstoke (Wesleyans), was presented with the banner by the Chief Scout, who then addressed the assembled scouts. He pointed out that Basingstoke was lucky in having swimming baths and so the scouts should train in swimming, as it was not only a healthy activity but also so that they could save lives. “Stick to your work. Go on as you have begun. Make yourselves efficient scouts in order that you may be helpful to other people. That is your great promise – to do a good turn to somebody every day. Carry that out. I have heard lately of a lot of good deeds done by scouts. Remember that every good deed reflects credit on you and on your brother scouts.” “At the call of Scout Master Charrett the parade raised three lusty cheers for the Chief Scout who then left the ground”. Unfortunately it was not under the watchful eye of the Chief Scout that Worting came second in the tug of war that day.

In August 1923 Worting troop joined others in the district for a summer camp at Hayling Island. However, this is the last specific mention of Worting for a while, as the scouting reports in the newspaper increasingly concentrate on the District report rather than on individual troops. But we may assume that Worting scouts took part in the activities that are described. At a concert in 1924 to raise funds for the summer camp the District Commissioner, Mr C L Chute, thanked those who supported the scouts. “The scoutmasters and instructors were people who had their own jobs to do during the day, but they gave up great quantities of their spare time, of which they had not too much, for the good of the boys”. The annual district rally that year was held in the ruins at Old Basing and the summer camp was on the Isle of Wight in the fort at Sandown.

The summer camp in 1925 was again at Sandown in ‘a disused government fort’ on the seafront. The boys paid for 75% of their own costs and “the scout masters had the privilege of paying their own expenses (laughter)”. A photograph of Worting scouts, dated 1925 give us the faces and some of the names of the troop at the time. There was Marlow, Marlow, O Kemp, C Allen, F Allen, A Kemp, T Garnett, J Young, P Lock, S Penny, W Owen and S Wood. Prior to camp there had been a service at Erdesley led by the Rev Charrett, father of Scout Master Charrett. The District scout rally was held in the War Memorial Park, and at which a silver medal and certificate signed by the Chief Scout and by Major Chute (District Commissioner), were presented to Scout Painter of the 1<sup>st</sup> Basingstoke troop. “Scout Painter rendered valuable assistance to the police in effecting the arrest of the two men recently sentenced to a term of imprisonment for breaking into Thorneycroft and Co premises”. In 1926 it is mentioned that the Worting troop was “under the charge of Rover Lyons”. The newspaper also reported at length a presentation by Lord Hampton and Sir Lionel Wells on scouting. George Willis, Chairman

of the Basingstoke scouts, offered some opening remarks. "We recognise the boy is a mysterious subject – full of that exuberant energy which is sometimes such an extreme nuisance to those with whom he has to do." "As a member of a troop a boy finds in a real sense that we are all members one of another, and instead of a repression of that vitality which is so valuable an element in a boy's life you have a discipline that tends to direct it into right channels". "One of the great advantages of the scout movement is that in the scoutmaster a lad may find his elder brother and confidant". Lord Hampton addressed himself to the public present in an effort to recruit new leaders. "We are dealing with young people and that helps to keep us young and to keep us hopeful". "Around the world scouting holds a charm for most boys". "The spirit of course is influenced most of all through the personal example and gentle leading of the scoutmaster" "We want to get leaders from all walks of life to come forward and take a hand. We cannot all give up so many evenings in a week and our summer holidays to scouting, but there is something almost everybody can do." This shortfall of adult support may be reflected in the fact that there was no summer camp that year as the scoutmasters were not able to spare the time, but there were two weekend camps, as well as St George's Day parade and Armistice Sunday parades.

In June 1927 there was a Scout Camp at Audley, attended by scouts from Hampshire, Portsmouth, Winchester, Romsey, Overton, Reading, Compton and Twyford. They were addressed by the Bishop of Winchester. Referring to the round table in the Great Hall at Winchester, he compared the scouts to King Arthur's knights and he laboured the positive role of Englishmen in global civilisation and the international growth of scouting. Summer Camp was at Shanklin that year. In December 1927, when the new Headquarters for 1<sup>st</sup> Basingstoke were opened, there was again a call for leaders. Lieutenant Commander Sanders "... spoke of the instinct for adventure of the wild Indian sort which characterised most boys when they reached the age of 11". He said that the need to do a good deed every day was "... not for the sake of self-glorification, but with the idea of forming the character of a true Englishman. He must endeavour to lead a manly, clean, straight forward life and play the game for the game's sake, not for reward". But times were changing. After a display of first aid Scout Master Jefferies said, "..... the knowledge of ambulance work which was gained by scouts was frequently put to good use in these days of swift moving traffic".

The summer camp in August 1928 involved an extraordinary amount of hiking on Dartmoor. The scouts climbed tor after tor and camped as they went, but as they headed for Bridestowe the weather became atrocious, and when they reached Two Bridges Hotel the owners allowed them to sleep in the summer house. In March 1929 Basingstoke held a concert to raise funds for the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday of scouting. It included songs, dancing and plays, at the Town Hall, which was filled to capacity. At the event Scout Harold George Thomas (Upton Gray) was awarded a Bronze bravery medal for rescuing a cat from 30 foot up in a tree.

1929 was the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday of the scouting movement and was marked with a Jamboree at Arrowe Park, Birkenhead attended by 50,000 scouts from 42 countries. It was the largest youth gathering to that date. The scouts who attended from Basingstoke were seen off at the train station by the Mayoress and were received by cheering crowds at the other end. They sent a report to the Gazette describing how they had entertained scouts from India, Albania, Germany, Denmark and Hungary, with more planned over the coming days. One of the Basingstoke leaders discovered that he had served at the front opposite one of the German leaders. "They linked arms and declared that they were now brothers". In October the District Association reported a shortage of leaders, and that two troops had lapsed as a result, despite a waiting list to join scouting. "But where are the men who will lead, sparing an hour or two? To help make our country full of good citizens, training their younger brothers to become men of character and worth". The annual rally was held at Memorial Park, with 200 in attendance. 400 scouts and guides were at the St George's Day parade at St Michael's, the first time the two groups had paraded together.

In 1930 the Worting Troop (12<sup>th</sup> Basingstoke) Scout Leader is recorded as L A Brazier assisted by F Terry and there were 14 scouts in the troop. In April at the District Church parade for Scouts and Guides the sermon by Rev Stanley included reference to the attempt on Everest's summit. "Then not so long ago that nearly all of us can remember it, there was that gallant attempt made to find a path to the top of the highest mountain in the world – Mount Everest –and you remember how all the world was thrilled by the adventures of those brave intrepid men who very nearly reached the summit. Perhaps two of them did get there. They were last seen 'going strongly for the top' – a fine end for anybody". The summer District rally in June 1930 was held in the Memorial Park. "The restless and exuberant spirit of the boys triumphed over the rather fickle weather". At 3pm they gathered around the flagstaff and were inspected by the Mayor, who said he was pleased to be there "and when he saw the boys enjoying themselves and looking so happy it almost made him wish he were a Boy Scout himself". In August there was scouts sports event at Glebe Field with side shows and produce stalls, and also in August there was a camp at Holm Farm, Shanklin, attended by troops from across the District. The same month Scout Master Charrett took a small number of scouts to Hamburg in Germany to meet up with scouts they had befriended at Arrowe Park. In the District report it is noted that summer camps had been held at Bognor, Avington Park, Elvetham Park and Poole, as well as numerous camps nearer to home and that there had been a camping competition at Hackwood Park.

In April 1931 was Scout Week. It started on the Monday with a camp fire. On the Wednesday there was an exhibition of handicrafts by the scouts and guides at the Town Hall, including woodwork, leather work, needle work, cooking and cakes, toys, rugs, paintings and drawings, basket work and cross stitch all for sale to raise funds for the scouts. The hall was densely packed for the presentation of certificates, 105 in all. The

judge, Mrs Boustead, said that when she was a child she had been told "You have got to learn to use your hands to make one shilling go as far as two and look like three." She on the other hand had learnt a motto from the scouts, "You thought you could, you said you would, and you did". On Thursday there was an evening's entertainment at the town hall, crowded to its utmost capacity. Amongst the entertainment described was this vivid picture. " .... Rover Leader Daniels fascinated the audience with a marvellously dexterous exhibition, first of club swinging and then of light swinging. For the latter the room was darkened and as the performer swung the two electric bulbs with extraordinary velocity around his head and body circles of violet light appeared to accompany the swinging lights. It is not too much to say that this was the star turn of the evening. It was greatly admired and enthusiastically applauded".

In scout week there was also a reunion supper for the Basingstoke 1<sup>st</sup> held at the town hall. The account sheds fascinating light on early scouting in Basingstoke. "Mr Charrett warmly welcomed all the old scouts and said that he was very pleased to include in that welcome three old boys who were in the scout movement when it started in Basingstoke in 1908. They little dreamt that they were the first in shorts that were the forerunners of this great movement. The troop numbered eight when it first started in Basingstoke and arose out of the old Boys Brigade." Capt Swan (Deputy District Commissioner) also spoke. "In the early days we did have some fun, said Capt Swan, and we did have some scoutmasters too. He well remembered one church parade held in 1909 when they had two scoutmasters who were not content with the uniform the Chief thought most sensible, but appeared dressed up in gauntlets, spurs, revolvers and all sorts of comic things. In the early days they had to fight for it. The movement, like all new things, was criticised and ridiculed, while a certain section of the population, though not influential, were actually hostile. Scoutmasters had to run the gauntlet of bricks and rotten eggs and were often followed down the streets by hooligans a hundred strong". Commander Saunders the ADC said, "He had a soft spot in his heart for Basingstoke..... (at training camps) ..... the standard of efficiency of those attending from Basingstoke had been very high and he believed that depended very largely on Mr Charrett (hear hear and applause)". Scout week ended with a church parade on the Sunday afternoon in War Memorial Park, with 454 attending. The Bishop of Winchester gave the service. He described various adventures of science and of the modern world including the airmen at Calshot preparing for the Schneider cup, " ... an almost desperate adventure, for it means going at three hundred miles an hour or more through the air. Not much more than a hundred years ago people said that if you went at more than thirty miles an hour you would not be able to breathe, but I came here today at more than thirty miles an hour and I am still breathing". He looked at the cause of peace in the world, a world perceptibly less peaceful. "If there is anything quite plain about the scouts and guides in this year 1931 and in the years to which we are looking forward, I think it is that you are called to be the international peacemakers."

Consistent with this international hope harboured by the Bishop, five Basingstoke Rovers attended the Rover Moot at Kandesteg, Switzerland, in August. The adventure was reported by one of the scouts. He described a meal on Berne station as. "... the quickest emptying of a train I have ever seen took place, for all of us were feeling pretty hungry, and there was already set for us on tables a sumptuous repast". However, those hoping the report would paint a picture of their surroundings may have been disappointed. "The scenery is so grand that it is impossible to describe it in a sufficiently graphic way to convey to any extent its beauties, but those who are here are indeed fortunate". And with that dextrous side step the reader is left to imagine the scene instead.

In April 1932 Worting scouts attended a Church parade at St Michael's, with 320 Cubs, Scouts, Rovers and Guides. The sermon was about selfless service and the role of volunteers in society. "Don't be content to simply do the job that earns your bread and butter. Do something extra; take your share of the voluntary work of the world". In April 1933 the Gazette reported on Scout and Guide Week. "The Basingstoke District is fortunate in having keen and able leaders both for the scouts and guides. Public support and sympathy, however, is lacking and greater work could be accomplished with more general backing". This may also be reflected in the fact that the scouting activities, once a regular feature of the newspaper is becoming more and more infrequent. Scouting Week was to have opened on the Easter Monday with a camp fire and sing song at the Vicarage meadow, but this had to be cancelled due to the death of Mrs Boustead, the wife of the rector and a long term enthusiastic supporter of the Scouts and Guides. On Wednesday there was a handicraft exhibition in the town hall and on Thursday night the town hall was filled to capacity for the scout and guides concert. On Saturday evening was the reunion supper, where the chairman, Brigadier General Portal, looked to the young to be ready to fight for their country and family in any impending conflict. "Some present had seen something of war and they were the least desirous of seeing more, but the circumstances of war were often unavoidable". On the Sunday was St George's Day parade, held at Old Basing, with 380 present. The parade fell in at the Jubilee Tree and marched to the Church where they renewed their promise and then marched back to the Jubilee Tree. In June District cubs gathered at the Rectory grounds for the cubs sports day. There is an interesting note about the winning pack, Overton. "A word must be said for their very able high jumping. It was not noticed until the end that one cub competing had his arm in Plaster of Paris, having broken the limb some time before. His jumping was excellent".

Nearly every troop and pack of the District was represented at the Basingstoke District Scout Camp between Christchurch and Highcliffe in August. "The scene at the Basingstoke Station on August 4<sup>th</sup> was a lively one" as the 64 scouts and 60 cubs entrained for Hinton Admiral Station, arriving there at 1.30 and having camp set up by 7pm. Although the cub and scout camps were separate, the tents were laid out in two

semi circles facing each other, with the leader's tents between the two. Each patrol of scouts formed a separate unit and was led by its patrol leader as there were too many for the few leaders able to take the time off. The boys bathed in the sea every day, visited Christchurch and explored the New Forest. "Parents send their boys to camp for their health and to give them scout training in citizenship. Certainly everybody came back physically fitter than he went. The size of the camp did not permit the scouters to give each boy much individual attention, but the scouts learnt to fend for themselves and their patrol; they learnt there is no room in life for selfishness and they learnt discipline." The Rovers helped with the camp organisation and a VAD nurse was there for cuts and sunburn. Also in August five Basingstoke scouts attended the World Jamboree at Godollo in Hungary. After crossing the Channel they travelled by train to Cologne. "Here we found members of the Hitler Youth Movement had prepared a great reception for us". The camp was held at a rally ground dominated by a giant cross. At the opening ceremony "The crowded stands at the sides of the gentle slope, the dense forest away in the front, the flutter of flags of all nations as the scouts marched across the rally ground to take up their positions. Soon the forests was edged with a fringe of crowded colour ..... the Chief Scout Lord Baden Powell rode in on horseback with an escort of cavalry. Slowly they rode along the winding line of scouts in the distance, at times disappearing from view from the crowded stands, flags slowly dipping in salute as they passed along. The Regent and the Chief Scout crossed to the saluting base. After words of welcome, the band struck up and the march pass commenced. For one and a half hours scouts passed by eight abreast, each nation giving its own particular salute and cheer. Before the march pass had finished came the most inspiring sight eyes can see – the 20,000 scouts from 34 countries rushing up the hill to rally to their Chief, the whole ground a swarm of vital youth. It was worth travelling a thousand miles for that moment".

On St George's Day 1934 was the first National Scout Service. 1500 scouts were present, of which five were from Basingstoke. They marched into Windsor Castle where they were inspected by the King and Queen, as well as by Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret. The Chief Scout was unable to attend due to illness. In November the District annual report reported that there had been a successful St George's Day parade with the guides, there was a large scout rally organised by the Rovers to raise the profile of scouting and many weekend camps were held over the summer by various troops.

The next reference to scouting in the Gazette was one year on with the District report for 1935. There were nine troops with a total of 292 members. "Scouts were responsible for jubilee beacons at Basingstoke Common, Farleigh Hill and Sidown Hill" and 200 scouts had attended the St George's Day parade in London Street. "The different groups have been active in various forms of public service to the community but naturally notice is not taken of their individual good turns, they would be too numerous and are

just what is expected of a scout". There were 31 camps in the District from weekend camps to two weeks, as well as many hikes.

But the further reporting of scouting activity in the Gazette becomes fewer and farther between, as war approaches.

## **The Second World War**

At a time of international turmoil, there is little room in the newspaper to report scouting activity. In May 1942, on Empire Youth Sunday, there was a rally at St Michael's Church. All the seating was occupied by young people of the youth movements of the town including scouts. The scout flags were marched to the front and the scout promise was renewed. In July 1942 there is a report of a Rectory Garden fete in Worting, which included a display by the Worting scout troop under Mr Woods. In August 1942 the District's summer camp was held at Rogate in Sussex between July 25<sup>th</sup> and August 15<sup>th</sup>. A hundred boys, including those from Worting troop, camped for three weeks, although as it is described as a 'farming camp' and one suspects it was work on the land not just scouting fun. "The camp was organised and carried through to success by Assistant Scoutmaster L Bittlestone and he made a good job of it." "It was a camp of laughter and friendship, of ordered activity and unhurried enjoyment. Camp fire entertainments, varied by informal attractions, demonstrated by the most talented boys, brought joy to all, including visitors. All were enthusiastic about another similar camp next year". As well as farming on their summer camp, the Basingstoke scouts in the town had helped in erecting Morrison shelters, collecting pig food and acted as messengers for the home guard and civil defence. All of the Worting Scouts got their national service badge for paper collection for recycling.

During the war the Worting scout leaders were called up. To stop it closing, patrol leaders from the 8<sup>th</sup> Basingstoke (Congregational Church, London Street) stepped in. Principally Len Grant, aged 17. As he was not old enough to take out a warrant he was supported by Phil Wood, a lay helper. Len Grant was assisted by Sefton Diddams, a friend from work. Sefton was also a runner for the Worting Home Guard. They had a troop cart and would march to camp at Sherborne St John. Sefton remembers a week-long camp at Ropley, notable for a song about him putting too much salt in the porridge. Two of the scouts at this time were Derek Ayling and Owen Blisset. They recall that they twice cycled to RAF Andover and back. On the first occasion the leaders got a flight in a Tiger Moth and they all had tea in the Officer's Mess. The second time they all got a flight in a Tiger Moth, and they had their tea in the Airman's Mess. The Worting Scouts would meet on a Saturday afternoon and would do activities in the area, including going up to Worting Woods and also camping along by the railway line at Oakley. Owen was reprimanded by the head prefect for not supporting the school team at Saturday afternoon matches, but Owen felt that scouting was more important. Owen recalls being attached to the Home Guard at Thornycroft, as their messenger and taking his turn at fire watch from the fire watch office on the roof of the factory. After one exercise with the Home Guard he came home so tired that while he remembered sitting down to his tea, he woke up in his bed. In 1943 the Scout census shows that at Worting there were

14 scouts under 14, one Scouter under 20, six Air Scouts under 14 and one Scouter over 20. A photograph from around this time puts some names and faces together. Sefton Diddams, Len Woods and Len Grant were the leaders. There was also Owen Blisset, Gordon Philpotts, Graham Gregory, Curt Woods, Joe Hawkins, Derek Ayling, Michael Burkett, Ray Partridge, Peter Bryant, Pat Allen, Tony Radnor, Ron Mitchell, Ray Oliver, Denis Marshall, Christopher Storey, Michael Hooper and Denis Plester. There are also two unnamed evacuees in the photograph. 1944 there was a Basingstoke and District Association meeting at Queen Mary's School and a gift was presented amongst others to Patrol Leader Ronald Mitchell of the 12<sup>th</sup> Basingstoke (Worting).

After 18 months Len Grant was called up and joined the REME. Soon afterwards Sefton Diddams joined the Navy and the scout troop had to close again, although there was a cub troop run by Gordon Philpotts until 1947. Sefton served on HMS Termagant, which was a destroyer, in the Atlantic, the Mediterranean and in the Far East.

## **The 1950's, 60' and 70's; The Lost Years**

After the war the available evidence is thin on the ground. In 1952 Worting is recorded as meeting at the Reading Room with Scout Master J L Springer, assisted by J Attwood. There were 8 Scouts. By 1965 12<sup>th</sup> Basingstoke (Worting) was based at the Worting Old School Rooms with G Huggett as the Group Scout Leader and Mr Cyril Oldfield as the Scout Leader, assisted by Peter Rollinson. Douglas Faithful was the Cub Scout Leader. Sefton Diddams recalled him as being a lovely man, who with his wife Yvonne, were a true scouting family. They were open all hours and cubs could go and have a sit and a chat with them at any time. The hall caretaker was Mrs Driver, Sefton's mother in law. She was very stern but full of energy, and a great supporter of the scouts. She assisted them until she was 84, and in 1981 was presented with a medal and a silver tray. She died in 1983. The 1967 the scouts registration document shows the Group Scout Leader was Ronald W Donald. At around this time the Worting troop acquired the cricket pavilion from Lancing and Bagnell which they rebuilt as a scout hut but this was not a success, so they bought and erected a pre-fab bungalow. This is the 'solid' half of the present hut. It was put up by Jeff Chrimes, Cyril Oldfield and Sefton Diddams.

After 1967 the Group Scout Leader was Mr Cyril Oldfield and the Scout Leader was Mr R W Lock, known as 'Bosun'. The Assistant Scout Leader, Mr Rollinson, had recently retired due to ill health. The Cub Scout Leader was Mr R Green, assisted by Mrs Yvonne Faithful and Helen Diddams, Sefton's daughter. In May 1967 they held a Worting Troop camp at the rear of Winchfield Rectory. On Saturday afternoon they went to the Winchfield Hospital fete and on Sunday they attended a service at Winchfield Church and in the afternoon went to Odiham Castle. Despite bad weather it was a successful camp which Neil Chrimes, Stephen Nash, Alan Betteridge, Andrew Gibbons, Andrew Rollinson, Roger Butter, Clive Gorringer, Jeremy Green, Paul Wells, Keith Rolfe, Andrew Crane attended. On Sunday May 21<sup>st</sup> 1967 the Troop colours were dedicated. The parade was led by the Cub Scout Leader Faithful and the Mayor, Harold Redstall, himself an ex scout, took the salute. The group colours were then dedicated at St Thomas of Canterbury Church by the Rev Desmond Springham. In June there was a District Camp Diamond Jubilee at Down Grange although unfortunately there was bad weather all that weekend including torrential rain during the scouts own service on Sunday. Also in 1967 Basingstoke Scouts camped on the banks of the Seine as part of the Black Prince Expedition, spending two weeks in grounds of Chateau at Port-Mort, half way between Paris and Rouen. Boys from the Worting troop won one of the competitions and so must have been present.

In 1970 it is recorded that Cyril Oldfield is the Group Scout Leader and Bob Lock the Scout Leader, and they are assisted by Mr J Donnelly. Mr R Green was the Cub Scout Leader still assisted by Yvonne Faithful and Helen Diddams. In the same year, Neil Chrimes and Andrew Rollinson became the first Worting Scouts to gain their Chief

Scout's Award. For a short while in 1970 a diary was kept and we get a glimpse into troop life.

In May 1970 there was a Cub Camp at Brockenhurst, with 23 boys, 7 adults, 4 children and 1 dog. Worting Scouts organised by Basil Hunt had been working on the pumping engine at Crofton as part of their Chief Scout's Gold Award, to assist in the restoration of the Kennet and Avon canal. They were present at the first steam up of the Boulton Watt beam engine and some of the boys put in as much as 50 hours work. At the Spring Bank Holiday there was scout camp at Huish Farm, Old Basing. The activities included building fire ships, small fire rafts sent down stream with the aim to burn a sisal string across the river. The older boys had a night exercise to the Kings Head pub. On Sunday morning there were games and in the afternoon there was stroll via the Queens Head, Mapledurwell, "where only pop was drunk". It was described as a marvellous camp with good weather, at a cost of 15/- a head. Present were the Scout Leader Bob Lock, Cyril Oldfield, Group Scout Leader, with Senior Patrol Leader Neil Chrimes, Patrol leaders Paul Wells and Kier Dowson, Assistant Patrol Leader Clive Gorringer, and Scouts Andy Crane, Stephen Donnelly, Peter Neal, Adrian Spencer, Stephen Earnshaw.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of May was the District sponsored walk, which started and finished at Worting House. The route was 25 miles for scouts and 8 for the cubs. It was a scorching hot day and the route was via Kingsclere, Whitchurch, Overton and Oakley. £460 was raised towards a Basingstoke Scout activities centre. (There is a tree with commemorative plaque from Worting Troop at the site, although the activity centre has been pulled down). In June there was cub sports at Down Grange and a Jumble sale at Church Hall for scout funds. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of June Cyril Oldfield resigned. In July the scouts helped with the Worting Church fete, organising a treasure hunt and a display of tree aerial work. In July Neil Chrimes and Andrew Rollinson received their Chief Scout's Award certificates, presented by Air Vice Marshall Sir Bernard Chacksfield in Winchester. There was a week long summer camp at Doghouse Farm, Chiddock, Dorset at a cost of £5 per head which 13 scouts and two leaders attended. The Newbury Guides were camping close by and it was noted that Kier and many others spent much of their spare time over there. They visited Weymouth, Lyme Regis, Portland, Sidmouth and West Bay where they went fishing. The highlight was reported to be the campfire at Seatown to which the guides were invited. Those who attended the camp were Bob Lock with Assistant Scout Leader John Donnelly, and scouts Paul Wells, Kier Dowson, Paul Chrimes, Andy Crane, Clive Gorringer, Andy Girling, Simon Girling, Stephen Donnelly, and Adrian Spencer. In October 1970 Howard Morrall formed Worting's first Venture Unit, with Kier Dowson, Andy Crane, Clive Gorringer, Neil Chrimes, Andy Rollinson, Doug David, Paul Wills and David Pike. The Assistant Venture Scout Leader was Bob Smith. Early in 1971 they were given a canoe kit and evenings were spent canoe building.

In July 1971 was a scout camp at Newtown on the Isle of Wight, attended by 30 scouts. The two leaders were assisted by the Venture Scouts. A note inserted into the troop diary in November 1971 states that the Group Scout Leader was now Ron Green, whilst the Scout Leader was still 'Bosun' Bob Lock, who was assisted by 'Bev' Badbury. In November 1971 the Venture scouts were provided with a new HQ at Worting Farm which used to be the White Hart Coaching Inn dating back to 1600. The scouts have been given use of a large room, and space to store their canoe, through the kindness of the owner Bill Mayell. Neil Germain recalls the boy's den atmosphere of this HQ in the 1980's, with comfy old sofas and a pool table where the Venture scouts would enjoy an evening relaxing. The Venture scouts were joined by two disabled scouts, Raymond Carter and Mike, who stayed with them for two years.

The 1972 Gilwell census records that there were two cub packs, a scout troop and a venture scout unit at Worting. The summer camp was at Wychet in Somerset and the scouts visited Lundy Island and Cheddar Caves. It was on this camp that there was what was described as "a great leap forward in the fortunes of the group as a whole" as it was decided round the camp fire that the unit should have canoeing as its major theme. In October and November 1972 the Venture scouts started running dances at the Carnival Hall to raise funds to buy the materials needed to make the canoes. 25 dances followed over two years raising £2000 to support the Group. With the money raised 9 canoes were built. David Pike became the Venture Unit's first Queen's Scout and Venture Awards went to Kier Dowson, Douglas David, Andy Crane and Paul Wells. In 1973 summer camp was held at Wytch Farm near Corfe, where canoeing in Poole Harbour and off Swanage beach figured highly. The scout troop was now being led by John Hill. The Venture Unit organised the Worting scout summer camp in 1974 at Corfe on the Isle of Wight, and 36 were on camp.

In January 1975 John Hill stood down as Scout Leader and Howard Morrall took over, he in turn being replaced as Venture Scout leader by Bob Smith. Kier Dowson and John Hill became Assistant Scout Leaders. In May a patrol attended the District camping competition at Malshanger and in June Worting won the Stockdale trophy for woodcraft, the winning team being K Wareham, R Cooper and C Grace. Summer camp was at Cleaver Point, Studland in Dorset where 38 attended and the activities included canoeing, hiking and cooking. In June Douglas David was presented with his Queen's Scout Award by Lord Mountbatten of Burma in the Orangery at Broadlands. In July Paul Wells and Cliff Jones gained their Queen's Scout Award, and Andrew Sadler and Andrew Ball got their Chief Scout's Awards. That summer there was fund raising sponsored walk, organised by the Venture scouts from Worting to Preston Candover and back, raising £100. In the Autumn Steve Nash and Andy Crane became Assistant Scout Leaders, and Molly Leach and John Puddifoot were Cub Leaders.

In May 1976 two patrols took part in the District camping competition at Malshanger, coming 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.

The minutes of the AGM in May 1978 are under the Chairmanship of D Mills and Ron Dyos is described as having been recently appointed to the role of Scouter In Charge, and by the AGM of 1979 he is being supported by Dave Collyer, Paul Wells and Stephen Conway. The summer camp that year was at Youlbury near Oxford. "The weather was excellent, beautiful surrounding countryside and pool on site". Keith Germain won his Chief Scout Award that year. Mr Mills role was changed from Chairman to President, and the Chairman was now Mr Horwood.

After this there are no more entries in the Troop diary until 1980 when a 'catch up' note was inserted by Ken Germain, the Group Executive Secretary. He wanted to record the Group's gratitude to Mrs Driver the Church Hall caretaker, who had helped with the troop since 1964, when her husband had died. She was retiring aged 84 and the diary records gratitude for her efforts and her great contribution to the well-being of the youth of Worting.

Through the 1980s and early 1990s there is little recorded. The Group Scout Leader was Ron Dyos and the Scout Leader was David Collyer. Of Ron Dyos it was said, "Ronnie loved kids, and loved to cook. You name it, he fried it. He produced wonderful, food soaked in wine, herbs and spices, using only the best and freshest ingredients". In August 1980 Worting attended the Jamboree at Crediton in Devon, with 6000 scouts from 23 countries. Worting came joint second in the Gateway construction competition out of 232 entries and the Chief Scout was photographed with them under the entrance. They were also joint runners up in the build an Anglo Saxon house competition. The Best Scout on Camp was A Barrett and Stephen Dyos got his Chief Scouts award. In 1982 the troop got planning permission to build the new hut for Worting. The project was guided to successful completion by Arthur Horwood. It was an old military hut bought for £100 in 1981 when the army were dismantling the First World War Haig Lines. This is the less solid half of the present scout hut. It was brought to site by Derek Mills, Chairman and latterly President of Worting. A new roof was made and fitted with the help of a local joinery firm. The cost of the project was nearly £5000 with much fund raising by the troop as well as grants from the Borough Council, Basingstoke (Scout) District and the Four Lanes Trust. When the Chief Scout, Sir Michael Walsh, came to see the progress of the new HQ and the Hampshire County Scouts offered to pay for the flooring. Maj Gen Michael Walsh handed over a commemorative plaque which is still on the wall.

Meetings had to be held at other venues in the district whilst the reconstruction took place. David Oliver and Mr N Wilkinson, active members of the committee, worked hard on the hut. The hut was opened on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1983. Mr and Mrs Ayling were great supporters of the troop at this time. At this time there were 42 scouts attending, making

it one of the largest troops in the county, and the leadership was joined by 'Timber' Jones.

In 1982, the 75<sup>th</sup> year of scouting, summer camp Kingsdown Kent, and the scouts had visited Calais during camp and had won the best gateway competition. Keith Germain got his Queens Scout award

In 1983 Neil Germain went to camp at Kanderstadt with the Scout Leader Ken Lang and his family. Ken's son was a cub, so a wide range of Worthing age groups was represented by this small group. Summer camp was on the Isle of Wight led by Kier Dowson, and Keith Germain of the Venture Unit went to an America scout camp at Lake Woodworth Albany NY State for eight weeks. Keith had organised dances at the 'leisure Centre' on Victoria Road to raise funds and had achieved his Queen's Scout Award. Neil and Keith's father was the Treasurer of Worthing Troop, and went on to be the Basingstoke West District treasurer for many years between 1987 and 2000. He was awarded a Medal of Merit in 1986 and a Silver Acorn in 2000.

The Best Scout on Camp trophy records where the troop went on Summer Camp and who was the winner of the trophy. 1981 summer camp was at Kingsdown and the Best Scout on Camp was David Rainbird. In 1982 there were joint winners, Simon Dyos and A Carraher, for the camp at Chalfont. S Cole won the trophy on 1983 at Haarlem and M Macaskill at Kingsdown the following year. I Stokes won at Youldbury in 1985 and P Byrne in 1986 and 1989 both at Torquay. P Walker won in 1987 at Haarlem and R Blackman in 1991 also in Haarlem.

Ron Dyos moved up to Group Scout Leader and was succeeded as Scout Leader by Barry Macaskill, described as "Short, portly, always smiling and never angry". Timber Jones was a well-known and much liked scout leader at this time, and Neil Germain's scout log shows that 'Timber', as he signed himself, was active as a leader through the late 1970's into the 1980's. His great passion was canoeing. He was replaced by Richard Payne who was the Scout Leader until 1995 although he continued to be involved in the troop until 1996. Ron Dyos retired as Group Scout Leader in 1989 and Gavin Clark took on this role in 1990. However when Richard Payne stepped down as Scout Leader, Gavin became the Scout Leader and in 1997 Neil Macintosh became the Group Scout Leader, and they both remain in post today.

In 1988 in the summer the scouts attended an event in Germany and in 1989 summer camp was in Torquay with 28 to 30 scouts. The two weeks in Torbay were 'action packed', with rock climbing, abseiling, swimming, caving and hiking, but much to the embarrassment of the Group cheques issued bounced, which the Group then covered until the Scouts could make good their debt. Ron Dyos was the GSL but the Scout Leader Richard 'skip' Payne had to reduce his attendance due to changes in his job. Gavin Clark first appears in the AGM minutes as preparing the scouts for a 50 mile three night

Dartmoor hike by a local training hikes and camps, although after its successful completion it was described as a 75 mile hike. The minutes of the October 1989 Executive meeting note that there was a 'heated and regrettable transfer of views' between Nina Silcox and Ron Dyos after which Ron resigned.

In 1989 Nina Silcox had started a Beaver colony in the group, but in 1991 Nina died of cancer whilst still only in her mid-40s. Her illness is first noted in the minutes by a 'get well soon' card sent in June 1991, and then in July flowers were sent, but in August she died. "Nina Silcox, who was a founder leader of Worting beaver colony lost her long struggle against cancer in August.... a lady who gave so much to Worting beavers". In October there was a memorial service at St Josephs with 150 attending and Gavin Clark gave the tribute from Worting. A bench made by BCOT was placed in the garden of the scout hut in memory of her, and was dedicated by the Rev Jeremy Vaughan.

Without a GSL and with 'skip' Payne not in full attendance, Dave Foster Keys came to the troops aid. Meanwhile Gavin, in charge of the Venture scouts, was planning a two week cycling tour in Holland in July 1990. The Scout camp in 1990 was called the 'Ham Jam' and was in the lake District. Derek Mills won best scout on camp. By September 1990 Gavin was the new GSL. His contribution to the group was immediately recognised as "phenomenal" his "efforts are immeasurable". "He always gives so much for the benefit of the boys". It was also in 1990 that Ken Germain retired after 17 years' service. The 1991 summer camp was at Haarlem but it got off to a sticky start when the District Commissioner would not sign off the permission as there were too few warranted leaders in attendance and 'skip' was behind on his training, but did so after this was rectified. In 1991 Worting organised and led the St George's Day parade. It was also, sadly, the year in which Ron Dyos' son died.

## Worting Warblings

In 1992 Worting Warblings, the troop newsletter, was established and gives a running commentary on the life of the troop to the present day. It contains a great deal of detail, which for brevity's sake we must edit to only the highlights, which are perhaps the backbone of Worting legend.

Summer Camp was at Downe and the Best Scout on Camp was Chris Hobden. In August 1992 there was a hike along the Ridgeway from Fox Hill, via Wayland's Smithy and Uffington Castle, to the Ridgeway youth hostel. Here the Worting scouts accidentally set off the fire alarm and a fire engine was dispatched. Gavin Clark is still talking about it years later! The next day they hiked to the Streatley youth hostel taking care not to argue and upset Gav further. On the third day they hiked to Watlington. The account in the Warblings contained a guide to translate Gav's stated intentions. A Stroll, not less than a three mile walk. A Walk, an uphill hike of not less than six miles. A Hike, at least 10 miles hard labour. An expedition, at least two days and you end up wrecked. "You have been warned". In later years the 'Gav Mile' and the 'Gav Hour' were added to this list.

There was a long weekend called The Wye Valley Wander where the scouts followed Offa's Dyke and climbed the Devil's Pulpit. After a night in a youth hostel they walked to Symonds Yat, with Jaydeep Korda (known as Jags) and Chris getting lost on the way. The next youth hostel was an improvement on the last and the safely returned Jags said "This is much better than the last one, at least we don't have to pedal for power". On the final day Jeff Daly walked back half a mile to find his lost watch only to discover it was in his lunch bag. Worting did well at the District Superscouts competition with James Emery winning the under twelve's, Paul Burkinshaw the under thirteen's and Andy Butler was the runner up in the under fourteen's. There was a dawn to dusk hike from Reading to Newbury along the Kennet and Avon canal and a light weight hike in the New Forest. At the District competitions Worting stood out, being first in life saving, second in cycling, Jaydeep, Andy, Tim and James won the District cooking competition, Worting won the orienteering and the Stockdale trophy and were fourth in swimming. The Warblings modestly concludes, "Between 8 and 12 teams from District have entered each competition so Worting Scouts really have performed at a consistently high standard".

In 1993 was a Walk in the Quantocks, a three day hike which started with Tim Clark flagging down an ice cream van, then stopping for a cream tea, all before his lunch. The next day was wet and lunch was eaten in a bus shelter. Having found the youth hostel that evening they went into town for pizza and then came back for their tea which was

another pizza. The final day ended at Wiveliscombe. Summer Camp was in the Brecon Beacons at Pencelli Castle, where the Best Scout on Camp was Andy Butler.

The 1993 Christmas edition was edited by Tim Clark and started with the following sentiment, "I want to get on and do something, not spend all this time composing grammatically questionable articles about it all". This edition records that the Worting Cubs won the District Craftsman competition and went to the County final. They didn't win, but Andrew Neale, Dave Wheeler, Daniel Bryant, Stuart Klat and Laurence Newland took part. There was also Kennet and Avon II. Having previously walked the 20 miles from Reading to Newbury Tim Clark, Andy Butler and Chris Hobden decided to cycle the 70 miles from Newbury to Bath over two days.

Worting did well in the district competitions, winning the Calleva life-saving award, the district night exercise, and won district cooking comp. "Worting is firmly in the district hall of fame". This year Blue Beaver, Neil Macintosh later to become GSL and Worting hero, kept the beaver colony going and "to our delight is now officially one of us". He was joined by Ginger Beaver (Julie) who was a Queen's scout and also went on to become a long term leader and Hero of Worting. This was also the year that some suggested that a Duck Race might be a good fund raiser.

In the June '94 edition Andy Butler described a fun packed day caving around Priddy Village, including the Goatchurch and Sidcot Swallet caves. The day trip to Priddy and the caves is a regular piece in the Warblings for generations of Worting scouts. In the gossip column a stunned silence is reported when Tim Clark suggested that girls should be allowed to join Worting Scouts. In May there was an Explorer hike along the tow path from Colt Hill, stopping at King John's Castle and the Greywell Tunnel and from there to camp at Middle Copse. The Popham weekend camp unfortunately suffered bad weather but the weekend culminated in a flight in an aircraft for everyone.

At this time the Gazette reported that three Worting Scouts had received their Chief Scouts Award and their Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award. They had all walked Hadrian's Wall coast to coast. They were Jaydeep Korde (scuba diving), Andrew Butler (scuba diving and back packing to Lulworth cove) and Tim Clark (archery and a dawn to dusk hike along the Kennet and Avon canal). The Hadrian's Wall walk was part of a Duke of Edinburgh as well as a scouting endeavour. Tim Clark, Andy Butler, Julie Clark, James Emery, Jaydeepe Korde and David Frid walked the wall coast to coast, but only three of the days counted towards their challenge. They were assessed by a local assessor, with whom they communicated leaving messages in plastic film pots. As the assessor watched them from afar they tried to stay one step ahead by setting off early each day and so it was that one morning they were able to wake Gav and Chrissie as they hiked passed. There is an account of the walking, the rain, rescuing a mole and a competition to look the stupidest (which James won by far). Andy ran out of funds on day three, "and thereafter was the object of charity". Amused contempt was expressed for his spending

habits, expensive junk food winning out over a steady approach. On day three they challenged some locals to a footie match against the 'best scout troop in the whole world', but lost 8 – 10. Day four brought them past the tree where Kevin Costner played Robin Hood and they took the opportunity for some re-enactment of the fight scene. James seemed to have had a humorous streak when it came to the battle of the sexes, which resulted in Julie stamping on his foot and the resulting injury slowing down progress. The three who went on ahead found time for an ice cream at a garage and comforted themselves that this was what James would have wanted them to do. He had to be given a lift by the assessor, but as he was not being assessed this didn't count against his effort. Day six brought them in to Tyneside, where the graffiti was so explicit "James hadn't even heard of it". Their arrival in civilisation was marked by a feast at Macdonald's, scoffed "in a manner that left other customers frightened". And so to the beach to make it coast to coast. On the last day there was swimming in the sea and sumo wrestling on the beach.

Summer Camp was at Chatsworth House, although on the far side of the estate from the main house. 23 scouts were in attendance. The site, called Heathy Lea, looked like a bomb site, being strewn with boulders and on a steep slope. But there are accounts of hiking, climbing, swimming and ice creams as well as cycling the Tissington Trail. The camp site had spring water, but the bucolic image was detracted by the fact that it was drawn from a rusty old tin bath where it collected at the spring head. The Warbling also listed the Summer Camp awards, as it does every year, but which are mostly too obscure to anyone who wasn't there. However, the origin of some awards can be discerned through the mist of time. Gav was awarded Nasty Navigator for his 'short walks'. The Best Scout on Camp was Tim Clark.

Worting won the County lightweight camping competition and there was a Dorset backpacking weekend which included a scout from Kempshott. Andy, Roly (Rowland Blackman), Jags and Tim made a circuit of the Isle of Wight and in their account food gets the most mention. On the second day the farmer on whose land they were staying took them to the pub along with his family. On the fifth day having made many friends on the trip they caught the hovercraft back to Southsea. Roly summed it up, "The people were friendly and the places we saw interesting, especially in the rural parts of the island. I didn't think much of Sandown Zoo".

Christopher Hobden was the editor of the Christmas 1994 edition. "This has been a very successful year for the scouts. When they haven't been winning a trophy of some sort they have been coming second, or on a bad day third. I have the privilege to be a member of probably the most successful scouts in Basingstoke this year". "With the help of the leaders, the infamous Worting Scouts have begun winning competitions". There was a Thames walk from Reading to the youth hostel at Streatley, on which they found a rope swing over the river and Tim Clark fell in. The next day they walked to Wallingford

and on to Shillingford to finish. The District day exercise was a ten mile incident hike. Worting's novice team came first and 'a young' team, including Stuart Macintosh, came third. More than half the troop took part in a Worting cooking competition and the winning team went on to the District competition where they secured second place.

The first editor in 1995, was David Frid, who had walked the South Downs, the Dorset coast, Hadrian's Wall, had been to the Brecon Beacons and camped with the Air Scouts. "I can honestly say that this has been one of the most exciting and fun filled years of my life" "A very big thank you to Gav for offering me a position in the best troop in the world". There were also some quotes from the District newsletter.

Pete Bond, the District Commissioner, wrote. "I will start this month's Bulletin by offering the District's congratulations to Worting Scouts Andy Butler, Tim Clark, James Emery and Chris Valentine for their success in winning the County Lightweight Camping Competition. Basingstoke West have succeeded in winning this competition three times in the past four years. With 32 Districts in the county that's a lot of commitment on the part of those who have supported them. To the leaders and parents alike, well done and thank you."

Frank Bond, Assistant District Commissioner. "Congratulations to Andy Butler, Tim Clark, James Emery and Jaydeep Korde from Worting St Thomas who, with Julie Clark and David Frid from Basingstoke Air Scouts, completed their Chief Scout's Challenge by walking coast to coast from Bowness on Solway to South Shields along the route of Hadrian's Wall, a distance of 132 kilometres. This was followed by a very interesting and amusing report back".

Pete Bond. "I was privileged to attend a joint Chief Scout's Challenge presentation of both East and West Districts, vis Worting and Air Scouts, when they presented their report to an audience of parents. It was an excellent report and reflected the true values we all should expect from Scouting. They were inspirational to other younger members present and deserve some special thanks for the manner in which they delivered their report. Well done to you all".

There was a cycle ride from Headley to Basingstoke. Tim rode through a ford whilst the others used the bridge and on a steep hill he was reported to have done 100mph and actually to have taken off and flown through the air, although this claim has not been independently verified. The route took them along the Kennet and Avon and across to Silchester, where lunch was taken at the churchyard, on to the Vyne and so to back to Basingstoke. The Dawn to Dusk Caper was a hike from Colt Hill towards Fleet in the rain. Tim Clark kept saying, "I am Job", and Chris Hobden mysterious muttering was, "They look like Cheddars, they taste like Cheddars, but they aren't Cheddars". They hiked through Aldershot to the Basingstoke Canal Museum, finishing at Frimley Green. David Peachey, looking back on a year in scouting, recalled one night hike when a Land Rover

skidded to halt and they were confronted by a poacher-hating, baseball bat wielding farmer, who asked Gavin "What are you doing here with a load of Beavers at this time of night?"

Summer Camp in 1995 was at Haarlem, the last camp where Richard Payne was the Scout Leader. It was very much enjoyed and resulted in several pages of obscure awards. James for instance was the Worting 'Don Juan'. A car mirror was used to transform 18 scruffy scouts into immaculate cool characters destined for the Mookie tent. There is a subsequent report of an anonymous Worting scout with his arm around a striking Scandinavian blonde at least twice his height. The Best Scout on Camp was Julie Clark. This year was the first Dads and Lads expedition which to Somerset, visiting the caves at Cheddar Gorge and a hike to Weston Super Mare. The Dads and Lads events are an annual opportunity for the scouts and parent to do a challenge together. Another section reports on a weekend at Lyons Copse was curiously lacking in detail but has the enigmatic "Tim liked the girls there and they asked him for his phone number". There was a New Forest lightweight hike at Fernycrofts, the highlight of which was Stu Macintosh avoiding being attacked by the wild horses. This year the Venture Scout unit Amicus was founded, including three girls as founding members, Sarah Baker, Vicky Wilshaw and Nicole Jacob. These count as the first girls in the Worting Group.

The Christmas '95 edition carried an account of a cycling trip to the Isle of Wight called Hills Spills and Thrills. It was a three day off road biking for both Duke of Edinburgh and Chief Scout's Challenge awards. Steep hills, great speed, punctures, breakages, stuff falling into the sea and a broken rear wheel all feature in the account. At the District cooking competition, 'Worting Majors' came first and 'Worting Minors' third. Worting won the County Lightweight Hike competition and the Ventures won the County Kudu which was a night time incident hike on the downs. The winners of the County Kudu are required to organise the following year's event, and the Warbling frequently report on alternating winning and organising for the Worting teams.

At the AGM Gavin and the other leaders were thanked, "how fortunate we are to have such a dedicated team who produce such a high quality of activities". Chrissie Clark said that now outdoor events had such strict requirements Worting was the only group in the district to have qualified leaders in caving, canoeing and mountain walking. In 1995 the idea of having a Family Camp open to family and to ex members was raised by John Kirkbride and approved. Wellington Country Park was suggested. Neil Mackintosh became the assistant GSL in addition to being a Beaver Leader.

The spring '96 edition opens with, "Worting is one of the District success stories, a troop to be proud to be associated with and a credit to Gav and Chrissie". The West Wight Cycle Hike starts rather dramatically by describing waving goodbye to 'good old England'. Once on the island there was a ride to Freshwater Bay and a swim in the sea. At the youth hostel Worting took on the locals at Footie and lost, 7-0. The next day cycle

repairs slowed down progress and Gavin directed them down what he called a 'flat road' which was described by the scouts as a 'vertical cliff unsuitable for novice cyclists'. That year Worting seem to have won the District night exercise, the District Orienteering competition and the Calleva life-saving trophy, described by the Warblings editor, Stephen Hobden, as 'a large portion of the District trophies'. Gav stepped down as the Group Scout Leader to become the Scout Leader and Neil Macintosh, Blue Beaver, became the Group Scout Leader.

The summer camp was at Wool with cycling, hiking and treasure hunts. The scouts went to Weymouth, Monkey World and the Tank Museum. Again the camp report brings forward some obscure awards. David Wheeler, on his first camp, got a bullet key ring, as he had scoured the firing ranges looking for spent ammo. David Peachey got a pen knife as a consolation for the machete he was not allowed to buy at the army surplus store and the Best Scout on Camp was Steve Hayward. Richard Baker, described a Chief Scout's Challenge on the Isle of Wight in July. On the first day they hiked round Alum Bay and over Tennyson Down. The next day, whilst walking the Worsley trail, they met a scout leader who had lost his scouts and finally their last day took them via Newport to Cowes, and so back to the mainland.

The Christmas Warblings was edited by the Venture Scouts. Tim gave an overview of his time in scouts which had taken him to three of the five main caving areas, canoeing on the canal, the Thames and the Wye, as well as canoe surfing in Gower. His ambition was to become an ASL with Worting. Amicvs, the Venture Scout unit, organised the Kudu event, having won the previous year. The incidents included a plane crash with a badly injured casualty, a blind fold version of one man and his dog, Indiana Jones and building a bridge across the moat at Odiham Castle. 17 teams entered, and the County Commissioner declared he was "very impressed". There was also an account of the Tour De Trigs, a hike to cover 50 miles in 24 hours, the fastest team winning. The Worting team was Andy Butler, Tim Clark and David Frid. 137 teams entered and the Worting team got well over half way, before they had to pull out through injury. For the scouts the District day exercise was entered by two Worting Teams, one of which won.

In standing down John Kirkbride said "we have one of the most successful groups in the district If not the county and we must be proud of that". 'Skip' Payne credited much of the troops success to Gav and Chrissie. Gavin stepped down to Assistant GSL and Neil stepped up to GSL, to allow Gavin to spend more time on outdoor pursuit for troop. Colin Scott became the treasurer. 1996 was also the first Family camp and was attended by 57 people. It was a success and it was agreed to do it again the next year

Tim Clark invested into V

The first Warblings of 1997 was edited by Chris Valentine. "I have been privileged to have been on many of the winning teams for various District and County events.

Worting are very proud to hold most of the cups and will be doing our best to keep them". The Scout report states, "The scouts have cycled in Berkshire, sailed in Surrey, caved in Somerset, hiked in Dorset, swum in Glamorgan and tobogganed in Aldershot". "The troop diary will prove that we have been bowling, canoeing, partying, orienteering, cooking, rafting, on a navigation exercises, camps, hut weekends, night hikes and treasure hunts". Tim Clark got his Venture Award, Richard Baker completed his Chief Scout's Challenge and Chris Hobden his Chief Scout's Award. Worting won the District night exercise, District cycling, Districts day exercise, District cooking competition and the County Lightweight Hike. Kestrels won the District Emlyn competition and so represented the District at the County competition at Lyons Copse, coming 7<sup>th</sup>, the team including David Wheeler and David Macintosh. This year was the first family camp, held at Mychett, where the families could join the boys for a weekend of camping.

However, Gav fell off his bike whilst organising a cyclorama route and broke his leg. This event was celebrated by Carol Valentine in verse.

Gavin whilst out for a ride, slipped and landed on his hide.

Ambulance and police appeared, broken bones at once were feared.

To hospital Gav was taken, left shocked and feeling very shaken.

After X rays and lots of poking, doctor said 'metal pins are needed, and were not joking'.

Gavin now is keeping busy, sending all the nurses dizzy.

Trying to dispel any doubts, about them joining venture scouts.

22 scouts went to Summer Camp was at Blacklands Farm, East Grinstead, involving swimming, climbing, abseiling, archery, rifle shooting and cycling. A small group, allegedly led by Messrs Wheeler and Hobden, were caught trying to capture someone's flag. The next morning the flag owner came over to remonstrate and after he had left, Gavin tore them all off a strip - for getting caught. Coming back from a day out cycling Chris Valentine slid on some gravel, Tim Clark swerved to avoid a collision and left the road. He hit a tree head first, splitting his cycle helmet in two, but undoubtedly getting off very lightly as a result. It remains to this day the object lesson for all scouts who think they are too cool to wear a helmet. Mrs Peachey also went to camp, saying afterwards "Everybody was important and nobody was left out. The camaraderie, the joking, the fun, the consideration for each other, and especially those evenings spent around the camp fires made me realise what a special, friendly, unique group of boys you are – well of course, your scouts". She perhaps didn't associate the small explosions in the neighbouring wood with a group of Worting scouts led by James Nash, who had got hold of some fireworks. It was also the first camp that Neil Macintosh attended and he has attended a good many since. Amongst the obscure awards Stu was awarded a strip of

plaster, for his nine inch gash from some barbed wire when he fell from a stile. Julie was awarded some brown banking envelopes because of her talent of removing money from men. Tony Lawton was Best Scout on Camp.

Paul Burkinshaw donated new pioneering poles to mark his departure as a scout after five years but he stayed on as the new troop quarter master. A duck race was held at Bartons Mill and with it was born a new Worting tradition. Recalled at the end of the year were the following from highlights from 1997, Ridgeway Walk, New Forest lightweight hike, the Chief Scout's challenge and three days in Purbeck. On a trip to the Brecon Beacons there was no oven for the pies which had been taken and they had to be steamed over a boiling pan of water. The next day walking along the trail the plunge pools in front of several waterfalls were enjoyed by the scouts despite the cold water much to the amusement of other walkers. In the Cooking competition Worting came 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. The Venture scouts won the County Kudu and were also commended for the time spent helping at Newnham Basset House a local old people's home. In August Tim organised a five day self-sufficiency trip in Lake District taking in the nine highest peaks, with Julie, David Frid and Andy Butler. In preparation they had already done a 44 mile hike down the Test Way.

The Duck Race took place on the Loddon at Bartons Mill and was reported as a great success, and pub were delighted by the increase in their trade on the day. The intention to make it an annual event. Family Camp was a great success again with 63 in attendance. In this year also David Peachey attended the Jamboree in Chile.

In 1998 'Skip', Richard Payne, left the troop. "Worting owes a great debt to Richard. He ran the troop single handedly for several years, always completely reliable and completely loyal, he supported Worting through the good times and not so good. Assistants came and went, but Skip hung on." The summary of the Thursday night activity, this year and pretty much every year, shows that the troop were often out and about. The Chief Scout's Challenge was at Lulworth ranges, but when they got there the army were already using it so they had to divert around the range making the hike much longer. The scouts hiked the Ridgeway and Chris Valentine led the team to victory in the Hampshire Lightweight Hike competition, "an event he first won in 1994 and on every occasion since". Tim, Julie and Claire all received their Venture Scout Awards and Tim started planning his Queen's Scout expedition. Andy Butler and Tim Clark got their Leaders Warrants. Also in 1998 an external storage building was planned, but took many years and much nagging and pleading in the Warblings to complete.

(David) 'Peach', got his Chief Scout's Award and on moving from Scouts to Ventures, claimed, "Worting is the best, and for me it's you that make it the best; the fact that we win everything just gives us something to argue with. The Worting family spirit is an amazing thing that I have never experienced anywhere else in my life". The troop won the District cycling competition the team including both Macintosh brothers. The troop

also won the District camping competition and the County lightweight hike. Perhaps it is no surprise therefore that the Assistant County Commissioner presented the troop with the Gold Activity Award for its varied and active outdoor programme. In 1998 Family camp was held at Wellington Country Park and for the first time Worting were represented by Gav and Chrissie in the Basingstoke Canal Challenge. The second Duck Race was well supported on the day and enjoyed good weather. Tim Clark and Andy Butler got their Royal Life Saving Society Awards of Distinction, Chris and Simon (Hawkins) their Award of Merit, and Claire got her Bronze Medallion. Chris Valentine got his Chief Scout's Challenge and his DOE Bronze.

There was a scout expedition to Dorset. They took the Sandbanks Ferry to Bere Regis and made their way to Kimmeridge, via Corfe in the cold and hail. They slept five to a tent on a slope and the next morning woke up to find they were all down one side of the tent. The next day they walked to Lulworth Cove, spending the night at Durdle door. The nick names of those taking part were Lairy Spice, Hairy Spice, Well I guess you had to be there Spice, Fairy Spice and Food Spice. And their conclusion was Lulworth Cove is a geologist's paradise. There was also an expedition to Exmoor. But there was a warning note in the Warblings to those scouts who did not make the most of their time at Worting, if you are not going to join in think about joining a less active troop and make way for more active scouts.

Summer Camp '98, was Sea Sun and Surf at Llangollen in Wales. Everyone enjoyed the activities, climbing swimming and canoeing, but the girls enjoyed the view "The best thing was that David Rayden was there. He is sooooo lovely. We both think he is the most gorgeous guy on earth. He is so fit, he is great, his body is so fine. We love him loads. Love Julie and Claire". Even Stuart described him as David (the King Master of Worlds Super Hero) Rayden. However it must be borne in mind that this was all according to an account presented by David Rayden in the Warblings. The Best Scout on Camp was Matt Kirkbride. Worting, including Rob Scott and Stu Macintosh won the cyclorama. The weather was so bad the paper disintegrated, but Rob kept a record of the clues and answers on his mobile phone and completed the form in the dry. Adapt and overcome! At the District Camp at North Warnborough in October Worting were the only troop who back-packed both to and from the camp.

David Frid, described the Queen's Scout Expedition in Snowdonia with Tim Clark, Julie Clark, and Andy Butler, which consisted of five days walking and four nights camping in the Welsh hills. The first day was in the Rhinogs, where they climbed 1460 metres. They reached the summit of Rhinog Fach after lunch and then descend and climbed up Rhinog Fawr. They didn't reach camp until 11pm. The second day took them to the Moelwyns. They had good weather and at a river, despite a bridge, all the boys jumped in, and found a natural water slide which they all enjoyed until Julie told them it was time to move on. After lunch they were buzzed by two RAF Hawks and after a full day hiking and

climbing they got to the next camp site. Day three was at Snowdon. "For me day three was going to be the most exciting. At some point I would be standing higher than any other person in all of England and Wales". On the way up the boys had a swim in a water fall pool. However standing on top of Snowdon after a long climb, they found themselves not in glorious isolation, but with people everywhere. They then climbed to the summit of Garnedd Ugain, with a perilous walk along Crib Goch, meeting up with Gav and Chrissie at Nant Peris. On day four Julie was not well. They climbed Elidir Fawr, and Glyder Fawr to the Castle of Winds, then on to Glyder Fach and the cantilever rock, possibly the most photographed rock in Snowdonia. By the time they got back down Julie was still not well, so with reluctance they turned away from Tryfan and descended into the Ogwen valley. On the last day the Carneddys took five hours to climb and then they moved on to Pen yr Ole Wen and from there ridge walking along Foel Grach, Garnedd Uchaf and Foel Frais. At the end of this epic expedition they were taken to a youth hostel for hot showers and take away food. They had walked 13 of the 15 welsh 3000's. "I know for sure that my companions were the finest team mates imaginable. That's scouting at its best".

In September Tim went to California for four weeks to help at a scout camp. He was presented with an engraved glass. "A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove, but the world may be different because I was important in the life of youth". David Peachey went to the 19<sup>th</sup> World Scout Jamboree in Chile, hiking in the Andes and building mud walls to help irrigate crops. Tim, Dave and Andy Butler entered the Tour de Trigs for the third time. Tim and Dave completed it, but Andy had to drop out after 37 miles.

1999's Scout report opens, "We want our scouts to have really good time, to remember their years with Worting St Thomas with real pleasure" "This year have seen Chris, Ben, Matt and Steve (Chris Valentine, Ben Snelling, Matt Kirkbride, Steve Hayward) all proudly earn their Chief Scout's Gold Award – they all made it through the rough and tumble, the good times and the grit-your-teeth-and-get-on-with-it times and they deserve our greatest respect.". The winning District cycle team were Steve Hayward, Stuart Macintosh, Jason Jordan and Robert Scott. The Venture scouts hosted Kudu and they were presented with the District Commissioner's Scouting Cup for the second year running. They also won the District cooking competition. Chris Valentine got his Chief Scout's challenge and DOE Bronze. Tim received his Queen's Scout Award, the ultimate scouting award.

In 1999 amongst the usual range of activities there was a two day hike in the Chilterns, staying at a youth hostel overnight and a May Bike Hike. Stuart, Andy Valentine, Andy Hobden and David Wheeler completed their Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award with an expedition to the Dorset coast to see the eclipse. Their chosen study was birds but on the first day they only saw one Peacock and two Ravens, so they switched their study to

tourism, although one does wonder how so few birds should have presented themselves. At the end of the first day they set up camp and had a swim in the sea waiting for Tim and Julie to arrive. The next day they hiked to Lulworth Cove, where this time they found Tim and Julie were already there having a swim. They camped at Norden Farm and Andy and Dave slept outside so they could see the shooting stars. The third day was the hottest and they hiked to Swanage. A few of Stuart's observations were recorded for posterity. "My feet hurt", 'my back hurts', 'my shoulders hurt', 'I need a drink' and 'I feel sick'. During the eclipse Gavin and Chrissie also took a troop of scouts to see the eclipse on a train which had 350 girl guides on board.

Worting attended the Holland Jamborette for their summer camp. On the Sunday arrival the supermarket was closed and so Gav went to MacDonald's and bought 155 MacDonald's for the Basingstoke West contingent. Once settled in there was lots of food, "cardboard, or bread as they call it there and pink and yellow paper also known as ham and cheese". But the VLA was very much appreciated. Tom Peachey, who was The Best Scout on Camp, reported "A great time was enjoyed by all, not to mention the hot weather which really made this camp a brilliant one. No doubt everyone will want to go again". Dave Wheeler's essay was quite short "What can I say? It was Brill! But how long to the next one?"

Later in the year was the Basingstoke Canal 24 hour challenge. Canoeing, hiking and cycling, and when David Macintosh had a puncture and no way to repair it another Worting legend was born; Andy Valentine stuffed the deflated tyre with grass to keep him going. As Andy Valentine prepared to move up to Venture scouts he wrote, "Scouting for me has been brilliant and I'm now looking forward to linking with Ventures. I bet they can't wait to get me! By the way I have changed my mind about having girls in the troop. I think that it's an excellent idea". The Ventures Scouts won the county Kudu the sixth successive year they had won or organised it. Joe Linsell, Marc Mullis, Ben Taylor and Neil Relf, the 'Hollywood Hunks', won the scout cooking competition. They were the youngest team to enter, none of them being over 12. On the Cyclorama it rained. The Worting team arrived back 85 minutes late, but still managed to win, as many of the others had come back early having picked up very few of the clues because of the bad weather. There was cycling in the New Forest in September which seemed to be defined by calamity. They set off from Beaulieu railway station, but within 100 yards James's chain snapped. Tim having fixed it, the party made a further 500 yards before Andy's chain snapped. Over lunch Tim broke his seat post whilst adjusting it. On day two they got tangled up in a cycling event with hundreds of bikes and James's derailleur's fell apart. Whilst this had to be walked back to the youth hostel the others went on to Beaulieu railway station.

The Venture Scouts also had a packed autumn. In October they won the cooking competition. Five members completed their gold DOE Awards with an adventure in the

Peak District. Chris Valentine got his Chief scouts Challenge and DOE Bronze. Two more got their Queen's Scout Award and David Peachey joined the gang show at the Albert hall. Three of the Venture scouts took on the Tour de Trigs for the fourth time and were invited to try out for a trip to the Himalayas. Two went climbing in Scotland including Ben Nevis. "I'm sure it is clear that we have continued to prove that there is no VSU in existence that is even in the same league as Amicvs, let alone better than us". "P.s we won the kudu".

Tim, Julie, David Frid and Andy Butler, who had done many expeditions together, were joined by Claire, and by Phil, 22, who had Downs syndrome. There was a four day hike on Dartmoor in preparation for a DOE Gold and Queen's Scout Award expedition in Snowdonia. Phil had to get fit and not let his team down and the pressure on him came to a head early in the expedition, but once through it, he led from the front. Soon things settled down and were enjoyable. Tim wrote "Phil has now earned – well and truly earned – his DOE Gold Award and I'm proud to have been part of it. Just maybe that is the most fitting climax to my 12 years of scouting dreams". Phil's mother wrote in a letter to the DOE award journal "It was because of Julie, Claire, Tim, Andy and Dave and their excellent team work that Philip has achieved his gold award". "Because of Philips problems the going was not easy at times, and the rest of the group made it clear to him that they would have no nonsense. With a lot of encouragement Philip grew in confidence and, by the end of the four days, was very different lad from the one who started the journey" "Without the group of Venture scouts, Philips venture would not have been successful". The expedition was reported by a two page spread in Scouting Magazine.

In 2000 the Worting hosted the St George's Day parade, which went well, but had very bad weather, although Gav was away at Windsor Castle for the St Georges day celebration there. But things looked up. Worting won the District cooking competition and came second in the District Emlyn competition, winning the pioneering project element. Julie and David became warranted leaders. The Venture scouts went sea kayaking at Newquay and accompanied the scouts on a weekend along the South Downs Way. Julie Clark, Dave Frid and Andy Butler were all presented with their Queen's Scout Award at Winchester by the great grandson of lord Baden Powell. Amicvs won the District cooking competition and the District Commissioner's cup for the third year running. David Frid was now too old for Venture scouts, "So from me, I want to say thank you to AMICVS and its members for four of the best years I have ever had. Long live the memories". Worting won the District Cyclorama, the winning team being Dan Bryant, James Nash, Robert Scott and Marc Mullis. Worting also won the District Orienteering with Tom Peachey, Dan Bryant and Marc Mullis. Stuart Macintosh was presented with his Chief Scout's Award at Whitchurch.

Andy Butler, Tim Clark, Julie Clark and David Frid were preparing to go to the Himalayas in Easter 2001 with the West Mercia Scouts, to tackle Chulu East (20,000 feet). They needed to raise £1500 each. As part of the fund raising efforts they decorated the hut. Andy Butler painted the murals in the hut toilets and the scouts in silhouette are from left to right Andy Butler, Tim Clark and David Frid

Tom Peachey, Darren Mullis, Chris Dossett, and Dan Bryant did their Chief Scout's Challenge in May on the Quantocks starting at North Petherton. On the first day they got lost twice (once sent the wrong way by a local, once distracted by their own appalling singing), were challenged with 'Get off my land' once and chased by a herd of cows. Day two survives in the records only as a hard days hiking followed by a damp night. The sun was shining at the start of day three but then it started raining again. This time they (correctly) ignored the local advice but still managed to take an unintended detour, which 'slight navigational hitch' turned out to be a short cut so arrived ahead of schedule at Longstone Hill. A final navigational hitch meant they ended 1 km from their true finish point. Did they walk that last 1km? No they phoned 'Mum' and moved the finish point to where they were. Adapt and overcome.

Summer Camp was at Wool in Dorset, where the scouts visited Monkey World, cycled to Lulworth Cove, walked around Kimmeridge and had a beach party in Weymouth, with a fish and chip supper. The Best Scout on Camp was Darren Mullis. In September there was a hiking trip in the Black Mountains including the Waterfall Walk. "The waterfalls were amazing, jumping in from great heights, they were scary". The Venture Scouts went to Capel Curig in North Wales. David Frid and Tim, Julie, and Gavin Clark set up camp and the next day they climbed the Carnedd's. Carnedd Llewelyn was the highest peak tackled which rewarded them with amazing views. Other peaks they summited were the Yr Elen, Carnedd Dafydd and Pen yr ol wen. On Sunday they went up the north ridge of Tryfan summiting in just under 2 hours. Tim's map blew away and he had to retrieve it, "he was like a whippet out of a cage and down the mountain quicker than you could say "Tim you idiot"". There was a new activity, the canoe camp, from the Thames up the Oxford Canal, down the Cherwell and back to the Thames. The Worting team did well at cyclorama answering the questions, but a broken bike meant they didn't return until very late (but to rapturous parental applause). Worting won the District orienteering competition, the team being Marc Mullis, Joe Linsell and Ben Taylor. Andy Valentine and Tom Peachey got their Chief Scout's Award. There were two scout teams at the District cooking competition from Worting, and they secured both first and second place. The cooking competition winners were Tom Peachey, Rob Scott, Matt Eglin and Neil Morton. The Christmas treat was donutting at Aldershot, replacing bowling at the Bowlplex as the scout use of the site was defined as a corporate body event. The Kudu event was organised by Amicvs, where the Sealed Knot in full uniform ambushed, interrogated and took each team in pike drill. The teams also had to manhandle a working siege cannon.

In October Tim and David Frid went on the Sail training Ship Tenacious, the largest wooden hulled ship built in the UK for the last 100 years. They sailed from Falmouth for a week with a crew comprised of able bodied and disabled members. On the first day at sea they set off for Plymouth and David prepared the sails, climbed the rigging and was given the job of tea boy for the Smoko (break). The next day he was woken at 2am for the anchor watch, ready to repel pirates. The following day they had 21 sails out, heading for the Channel Islands, anchoring at Alderney. In the morning they went ashore and later set sail for Cherbourg where they spent the night. On day six they landed and explored Cherbourg the next day returning across the Channel to the IOW. On their last day they cleaned the ship and David returned to Worthing "changed from a land lubber to a confident sailor".

In 2001, having raised the money needed, Julie, Tim, Andy and David did their Himalaya trip. They didn't reach the summit of Chulu East, but did complete the Annapurna circuit, crossing the highest pass in the world at 5,400 feet, the Thorong La. "The expedition was absolutely superb and a marvellous experience". Also that year Chris Valentine climbed Kilimanjaro, a major physical and mental test, reaching the Uhuru Peak, at 19, 455 ft the highest place in Africa. The Venture scouts won the Venture cup for the third year running.

The Summer Camp was at Gradbach, which included a trip to Buxton and to Alton towers. Ed Scott was set the task by Chrissie of collecting the 50p coupons off car park tickets saving £5 on their pool entrance fee. "The people in Buxton Spa swimming pool will never want to see Worthing St Thomas scouts again. They blew the whistle more times than ever before". David Macintosh (Macca) was Best Scout on Camp.

At Orienteering held at Micheldever in October Worthing came first and second and Worthing won the Cyclorama, despite the bad weather. Worthing's fourth win in five years, the team being Peter and John Nickell, Rob and Ed Scott, Matt Miles and Matt Quayle. There was a camp at Osmington Bay Activity Centre at Weymouth, staying in four bed chalets and enjoying dragon boat racing in Portland Harbour. There was a canoe camp where the Canadian canoes were laden with food and camping equipment. There was also a cycle ride from Bath to Bristol along the Avon, crossing to Wales over the Severn Bridge. Tim took the over 14's walking in Snowdonia and the younger scouts had activities in the New Forest. County Champions Lightweight Hike winners were Rob Scott, John Nickell, Ed Scott, Peter Nickell and Richard Lee. The Chief Scout's Award was achieved by David Macintosh and Rob Scott.

In this year was the transition into a new uniform and the new age structure, which meant losing the older scouts to Explorers. With this change the example and influence of older scouts on the younger scouts at meetings and events was lost and it is a loss that is still regretted. Trevor Smith who had been a scout in class of 88 and had gone with Worthing to the World Jamboree in Bavaria came back as a leader for a short while.

In 2002 Julie explored South America, with a trip to the Amazon rain forest and a visit to Machu Picchu and Lake Titicaca. David Frid went down under to Fiji, Australia and New Zealand. The Hampshire Scout Expeditions included eight Worting Explorers and Tim and Dave set off to Mount McKinley in Alaska, the coldest mountain in the world, as part of their training to climb Mount Everest in 2007, scout centenary year.

In the spring there was the Dads and Lads Dorset Doddle, starting from Wareham they hiked to the deserted village of Tyneham, having lunch in a quiet rocky cove. It was far from a doddle for some of them and they reached Lulworth over some steep climbs and were rewarded with an ice cream (negotiated at a good rate for buying in bulk). The next day they walked to Durdel Door. Summer Camp was at Buckmore Park in Kent. The scouts went climbing, were exposed to history at Chatham, did archery and air rifle shooting, swimming, caving and rock climbing. There was Go-Karting, which was slow but fun and a 'pink slop' fight. Pink Slop was the troops name for a pink Angel Delight like pudding. The tradition of fighting with it on camp, which started with a gesture of frustration by Julie who was trying to serves seconds to impatient scouts, lasted a few years and although remembered with affection is probably best left in the past. According to the Warbling report Richie Bird got fancied by a Brownie and Ed Scott was always up a tree, Neil Relf got a touch of the verbal ramblings, wittering on about needing budgies down the Buckmore Park Cave system and Andy Humberstone was 'rock solid'. Best Scout on Camp was Rob Scott, despite putting Rolos in a stir fry. "Robs scouting years have seen him grow from a reserved 10 year old into the confident, accomplished and caring young man he is today". Overheard on camp, "What's the name of the Lake in Scotland where the Loch Ness monster comes from?"

In the autumn there was a hike from Inkpen Beacon 22 miles back to Basingstoke. Sam Veel made it to White Hill and he had been a scout for only 2 hours when he set off. There was a Riverside Riders expedition, two days and 57 miles, starting at Hampton Court, staying overnight in a scout hut at Frimley Green and then to home the next day, an hour ahead of schedule. The event took in the Thames, the Wey navigation and the Basingstoke canal. There was a Canoe Camp on the Wye. The river was flowing too fast to launch the Canadians at the planned launch site, but a good weekend was had on the fast flowing river, including riding the Symonds Yat rapids. "It's been a fine year for achievements and we are immensely proud of our 11 District champions who won the raft race, orienteering and Cyclorama trophies and of the Explorers who bought home the County Lightweight Hike trophy" ( Tom Peachey, David Macintosh, Rob Scott, Neil Relf, Tom Hull). Neil Relf got his Chief Scout's Award.

At Christmas, whilst for most there was fund raising by bag packing at Safeways, some were away in Thailand. For three weeks over Christmas 2002 Ben, Tom and Macca were in Thailand at the 20<sup>th</sup> World scout Jamboree, with 30,000 scouts. "It has had a profound

effect on my outlook on my position in the world". They tasted food from all over the world, with the British contribution being fish and chips.

In 2003 Gavin Clark was awarded the scouting Medal of Merit for his outstanding service to scouting and by implication to Worthing and Basingstoke District, for over 15 years. There was a London riverside expedition starting at the Thames barrier and cycling through Docklands, along the south bank and through the royal parks, passing the Dome, Greenwich, the Cutty Sark, Tower Bridge, Parliament and Buckingham Palace, with lunch on HMS Belfast. After tea at MacDonald's and a night hike up Piccadilly, Regents Street, Oxford Street and Hyde Park they stayed at Baden Powell House in London and on Sunday they visited the Science and Natural History Museums. In the spring the scouts hiked 13 miles along the Ridgeway to the Ridgeway youth hostel and then cycled back to Basingstoke.

Summer camp was the Harlem Jamborette. Greg Catlin figures highly in the account, "Irrepressible, unstoppable, born to talk, the voice of Worthing Scouts. In true style Greg must have chatted to most of the 3000 people on site – he entertained most, wound a few up and confused even more. A touch too much sun temporarily silenced him". Apparently one Dutch boy on a bus, who Greg was talking at, tried to strangle himself to make Greg stop. Andy Humberstone, it was reported, "is a lion amongst men". Joe Linsell, Grampa Joey, "made friends with everyone", especially Austrian, Dutch, Swiss and Italian. Rob Scott's end of camp gift was Lip Balm and Love hearts, but the only explanation offered for these gifts was that "Rob had a very good time". Dave Wheeler and Andy Valentine were at camp as young leaders. Of Julie Clark it was said "Life is always a lot nicer when she's around". Happy memories included failed attempts to pole jump a dyke, Austrian scouts doing a bottom slapping dance, the open air disco and an amazing firework display. There was a close bond between Worthing and scouts from Basel. As a result Monika has been a friend of the troop ever since. Ed Scott won Best Scout on Camp.

In 2004 Tom Peachey went to work at the scout run Sunrise Orphanage in Kampala, staying with a local family. He met the Chief Scout and trekked up a volcano through jungle to see the gorillas, visited the botanical gardens in Entebbe and a displaced person camp where Ugandan scouts were working. "It's an experience I will treasure for the rest of my life". He spent his last week travelling to Mount Elgon, and he went white water rafting on the Nile.

On May bank holiday weekend there was walking in Wales for three days. In July Neil, Ed, Andy, Adam S and Adam Carpenter did their Chief Scout's Challenge along the Ridgeway to Streatley. In September Andy Humberstone, Matt Miles, Richard Lee and Peter Nickell did their Expedition Challenge along the Thames to Didcot. Another troop trip to London took the scouts along the London marathon route, starting at Greenwich Park, passing the Naval College, Cutty Sark, Tower Bridge and the Tower of London.

Unfortunately it rained all day. They stayed overnight at the scout centre at Tower Hamlets where it appeared that a lot of food was eaten. After tea a neighbouring hall had food left over from a family party and the scouts were invited in to finish it off so that none was wasted. After this, the scouts then popped over the road to the fish and chip shop where they filled up any remaining space in their tummies. The next day they came across the Arsenal team waiting for the team bus and were able to mingle and chat with them for a while.

Summer Camp was at South Penquite, on Bodmin Moor, on a working farm. They were able to cycle to the beach and had a cycle treasure hunt. They also built an oversized hammock, which unfortunately collapsed when they all tried to get in it at once. A big hit was the Banger racing, watching cars beat each other up. "It was fantastic!" The last race of the evening the bangers towed caravans through the mayhem, which the boys particularly enjoyed being from the tent using side of outdoor living. The Best Scout on Camp was Greg Catlin. Later in the year the scouts walked to Winchester from the Romsey direction staying at the youth hostel which was attached to the Winchester Mill. "Our room was right outside the pub, so consequently there were ...plenty of drunk people for Greg to meet through the window". The next day they walked to Bradley, declining a lift from a passing motorist. The scouts went canoe camping on the middle reaches of the Thames and cycling across the New Forest. They also had a September weekend at Osmington Bay.

Explorers Rob Scott and Macca did an 'across the map challenge' walking from one side of a 1:50,000 map to the other, 25 miles. Following Harlem Dave Wheeler and Andy Valentine went to Holland to meet up with Dutch friends and Julie, Rob, Steve and Macca went to Basel in October to meet their Swiss scouting friends. In a letter to Gav, Matt Miles set out his top 10 Worting memories, which included winning Cyclorama, conquering his fear of heights, a night hike to Oliver's chip shop, the water fight on canoe camp, his expedition challenge and the Dutch Jamborette. In 2004 Worting won the District orienteering competition, the winning team being Richard, Sam, David, Joe and Matt and the Explorer cooking competition was won by Denali, the Explorer scout troop based at Worting. The Editor of the Warblings noted "Undoubtedly Worting is now the best troop by a long way in the District, which is shown by their success in many of the competitions, including Cyclorama, cooking and orienteering". In the Warblings Gav wrote, "It is one of the privileges of being associated with this great scout group for so many years that one can watch little lads grow into mighty men".

In 2005 there was a hike from Ibthorpe to Hungerford, the next day taking the Canadian canoes along the Kennet and Avon. The Explorers went to the Mendips climbing and abseiling on Split Rock, then going underground to Rod's Pot. On another occasion they cycled from Basingstoke to Cholderton and back. The Lads and Dads event, where parent and scouts do an expedition together, was cycling on the Isle of Wight taking in

the Needles, Carisbrooke Castle and Tennyson Down. They stayed overnight in a scout hut still recalled as perhaps the prefect scout hut, and the model for all others. Summer camp 2005 was in the Lake District at Great Tower for 10 days, climbing, Kayaking and hill walking. The conservation task was to clean out the pond on camp. They visited the Pencil Museum, but the visit was remembered for its go-karting track more than its pencils. There was a visit to Sellafield and they were buzzed by two Tornados at the top of Wrynose Pass. The Best Scout on Camp was Jonathan Bradford.

In the District cooking competition, the Italian Mob from Worting won, being Laurence Wilson, Clark Williams, Ben Mills and Chris Smith. Orienteering was in Chawton Park Woods, where Worting Scouts Team 1 and Team 2 were joint first. Worting also won the District night hike (Greg Catlin, Jonathon Bradford, Laurence Wilson and Joe Dibley), the District Cyclorama, (Will Blakely, Tom Humberstone, Joe Dibley, Matt Perman and Nick Spence) and the District Backwoods Cooking Competition, (Will Blakeley, Laurence Wilson, Mykel Halloway, Nick Spence and Mark Nickell). On the canoe camp Greg found a bike in the river, which he managed to sell to a passer-by. Rob Scott and Macca spent their summer in America working as leaders on a camp. The Chief Scout's Gold Award was achieved by Oscar Rickets, Greg Catlin, Sam Hull and Jonathon Bradford.

In July Paul Smith, a past Chairman and with his family a great supporter of the troop, wrote, "I have been proud to be associated with the best group in Basingstoke. I understand from a very reliable source (Neil) that Basingstoke is the best in Hampshire and Hampshire is the best in England". Gav's Best Bits from 2005/6 Scouts as recorded by the Warblings were winning the dragon boat race at Osmington, hot chocolate on the sailing ship Discovery in the Solent, "Chatting up the Lord Lieutenant as we packed her bags in Sainsburys", canoeing from Aldermaston to the Thames and swimming in the Avon after a weekends canoeing. Tom Peachey, David Macintosh, Neil Relf, Paul Dack, Robert Scott and Brian Christie all completed their Queens Scout Award expedition.

Meanwhile Tim's training and preparation for Everest attempt continued. It included climbing Cho Oyu in Nepal the 6<sup>th</sup> highest mountain and three trips to the Alps, summiting Mont Blanc, as well climbing in the Cairngorms, Snowdonia, the Brecon Beacons, the Peaks and Lakes most months of the year. Fitness training included entering the Original Mountain Marathon in Scotland, finishing 42<sup>nd</sup> out of 300. Tim was also regularly out on the downs locally and some recall his towing a tyre behind him on a night hike whilst carrying a fully laden rucksack.

In 2006 Dads and Lads cycled from Reading to Newbury and home along the canal tow path. Gav got a black eye, slipping and "using his head to soften the blow" the Warblings unkindly observed. Summer camp was in Wales at Swansea taking in the Black Mountains, Clydach Gorge, Swansea Bay and the Mumbles and the mountain cycle trails of the Afan. The camp was perfectly situated for all the activities but Gav's jaw dropped at the dreadful state of the camp after the previous inhabitants' had endured bad

weather. It was all muddy and rutted. The scouts hiked down the Gower peninsular, cooling off in the sea and George Bethell invented 'surf rugby' on Rhossili beach. Jumping into the plunge pools of waterfalls was an irresistible draw of hiking alongside mountain streams. The Best Scout on Camp was Laurence Wilson.

Worting won the District Orienteering competition, the team being Laurence Wilson, Joe Dibley, Matt Perman and Merson Webb. The District Cooking competition was won by Tom Humberstone, Joe Dibley, Nick Spence and Jack King (The Spanish squad) and in joint second were another Worting team, the Chapatti Chaps. The District Cyclorama was won by Joe Dibley, Matt Perman, Kris Munt and Jack King.

In November erstwhile Worting leader Bob Lock retired as District Commissioner of Basingstoke East after 40 years in scouting. "His service to scouting in Basingstoke is unique and it is appropriate for him to receive public acknowledgment of the service and commitment given to young people in the Borough of Basingstoke and Deane".

The big news for 2007, the scout's centenary year, was the successful Hampshire scout expedition to climb Mount Everest which included Tim Clark, who took his Worting scarf to the top of the world.

"After finally getting a weather forecast for good weather we left the next day on our summit attempt". "We left Base Camp at 5am as usual and started our way up through the Khumbu icefall, it was evident fairly quickly that Nathan, the team leader, wasn't at full strength. He had had a cold for a few days." "It took him a long time to get up to Camp One and he was not fit to make it to camp two. He decided to stay at camp one and so the team had to leave him behind". "We started our climb up towards Camp Two, moving quickly at first, getting to within one kilometre of Camp Two. By then it was nearly 1pm and we'd been walking in the midday sun for a couple of hours. The western cwm (valley) acts as an oven, due to Nepal's proximity to the equator the sun is high in the sky before 11am and from that time on the cwm starts to heat up, the sun comes in, heats the air up and due to the steepness of the mountains on all sides the air doesn't escape but just gets hotter. It took us over 2 hours to walk the kilometre to our camp, in the end having to stop after every step for several seconds and having to sit down for a rest every 100 metres". Nathan was able to join them at Camp Two, but knew that he would not be able to make it to Camp Three.

"Our day up to Camp Three was one of the toughest on the mountain, again due to the heat, our thermometer tipped over 45 degrees that day. Camp Two to Camp Three starts off simply, walking to the end of the cwm but there you hit the Lhotse face, a 45 degree 1,200m high wall of ice". Camp Three is part way up the Lhotse face and that night they had to start using oxygen. "The next day involved covering the other 700m of the Lhotse face, the yellow band and the Geneva Spur." James was moving slowly and Dave and Tim stuck with him. "The yellow band is a narrow layer of sandstone that runs

across the mountain creating a 100ft steep rocky section, a notoriously technical part of the mountain but one we overcame with no problem at all. We eventually got to Camp Four just before 5pm, only five hours before we left for the summit". Having eaten, slept a little and prepared everything for the final ascent, they were ready to go at 9.30pm. "The weather was perfect, fairly warm at -30 C and with very little wind. There was however only the slimmest slither of the new moon to guide our way up the mountain, not ideal at all, this brings with it challenges and dangers that don't exist with a full moon. We set off virtually in pitch black with only our headtorch beams to show us the route up the mountain." "We carried on up the mountain moving at our regimented slow pace, step two breaths, step, two breaths. We got to the first turn round point at 1.45am, we knew we were making good time and knew that the south summit was about the same distance we had just covered ". "By about 4.30 the sun is starting to rise, this is when it started to get a little more real, and a little more difficult and a lot more emotional. We had been climbing first up a shallow gully then up the steep face towards the south summit for 7 hours and were beginning to get tired. We could see the sun rise over Tibet to our right and the huge shadow caused by Everest stretching into Nepal to our left and we were able to look back on where we had come from and realise we had a relatively short distance to the south summit. It was at this point we started to realise too that we had a very good chance to get to the top." "We reached the south summit just before 5am, from there you can see the summit a few hundred metres ahead along the impressive summit ridge. That point was such a milestone I had a bit of a cry, a lot of a cry to tell you the truth, a proper blubbering cry in fact! " "We continued on down from the south summit and along the ridge to the Hilary Step, a 40ft snow and rock climb" "Having reached the top of the Step you only have 200 metres to go to the top. The three of us climbed to the top together at 6.50 am on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2007. We made a radio call to base camp and to Nathan ....took a few photos, including a very important one for me with a Worthing scarf. Although we spent about 30 minutes on the top, it went very quickly, we hardly had any time to enjoy it, it was quite cold. The whole experience was amazing and one I will never forget, summit day especially was one of the most emotional days of my life". Peter Duncan the Chief Scout summed the expedition up. "This challenge show cases everything that is great about scouting"

But there was also tragic news in 2007. "It is with sadness that I announce the death of one of our past scouts. James Nash was killed recently in a car crash. James will be remembered as a loveable rogue who brought a lot to Worthing scouts and also got a lot out of it. He was always into mischief but would always be there to help if he could".

2007 was also the year that girls joined Worthing scouts. Ashleigh Smith and Alex Miles both had brothers who had been in the troop and were keen to follow in their footsteps. Although this coincided with a requirement that girls be allowed to join scout troops, Worthing had allowed girls to join following a vote by the scouts, but none had come

forward. It was some years later that Kirsten Hopkins became in turn the first Worting girl Beaver and then Cub as she too followed her older brother into the troop.

Worting troop went to Holland Jamborette for Summer Camp. By tradition Worting invited the Swiss scouts over for tea, including Monika. The site was perfectly situated by a small beach, and seemed to be a honey pot for all the girls in the vicinity. In some parts of the world Basingstoke is a by word for good looking young scouts. Jack Hopkins acquired the nick name, Dirt Monkey for his inability to keep clean and Kurtis Eagle won Best Scout on Camp. The troop became briefly internationally famous on U Tube doing the banana song. Closer to home George Bethall represented Worting at the 21<sup>st</sup> World Scout Jamboree, at Hylands Park, Chelmsford. Family camp was at Dockenfield, with excellent activity facilities and a delightful river running through the camp site.

David Macintosh and Tom Peachey were presented their Queen's Scout Award by Louisa Portal the District President. "They gave a very well thought out talk, very funny at times and always with a tangible enthusiasm which we all enjoyed. These young men are a credit to scouting and to our district. Very many congratulations to you both". They both also attended the parade of Queen's Scouts at Windsor, where the Queen, Prince Philip and the Chief Scout inspected them. The Queen stopped and had a few words with Macca. Macca, now a wise old scout, offered his thoughts. "Worting gives scouts much more than just troop meetings. It gives opportunities. Worting is one of the best groups in the county. I promise you that the things you do through scouts will stay with you for the rest of your life". Chief Scout's Gold Awards were achieved by Rory Bethell, Tom Humberstone and Laurence Wilson.

The scouts cycled from Waltham Cross down the Lee Valley to the Thames at Rotherhithe where a short clipper ride brought them to the Millennium Dome. Here they attended the scout celebration in the O2 arena, with Nick Spence in the cast, Neil Relf on production and Tim in his Everest summit gear. The next day they all cycled to Hampton Court. Towards the end of the year Worting scouts joined FOAM (The Friends of Ancient Monuments) over a couple of weekends at Odiham castle and helped to clear the moat, with much mud, fun and tomato and pea soup. They were joined by Julian Richards, the BBC's archaeology reporter, who kindly presented Worting with a signed copy of his book.

Early in 2008 the Dads and Lads was hike around the Quantocks, ending up at a spectacular stretch of coast, where fossils were sought but not found, but ice creams were enjoyed in a cafe garden in the sun by the shadow of a medieval ruin. The 2008 District cooking competition was won by Worting, the team being Chris and Ash Smith, Alex Miles and Sam Stevens. Family Camp was at Dockenfield again, in a slightly wilder field than the previous year and although it rained very hard on Sunday, even the wettest wet did not dampen Worting spirits.

Summer Camp was at Wool, the Explorers having cycled down to Dorset from Basingstoke. During the week there was a visit to Monkey World and the Tank Museum, a night hike to see the glow worms and a hike to Tyneham. One evening there was pilgrimage to Lawrence of Arabia's grave for the new Assistant Scout Leader David Hopkins, referred to as J as the troop already had too many Davids. One day was spent at Weymouth beach with fireworks in the evening, and there was a cycle treasure hunt, and fossil hunting at Lulworth Cove. On the last evening was an evening barbeque at Kimmeridge. At the end of camp Andy Humberstone was awarded the James Nash trophy, an illuminated crystal rock with a soft light, which represented James Nash's own caring nature allied to a rugged exterior. Andy was a mentor and 'big brother' very much in the spirit of James Nash. The Best Scout on Camp was Will Scott.

The Autumn Challenge was walking the Ridgeway from Fox Hill to the Ridgeway youth hostel and then cycling home to Basingstoke the next day. The walk along the Ridgeway took the scouts past ancient monuments such as Wayland Smithy and Uffington Horse. County Kudu was won by Worting and the District Cyclorama was won by Will Scott, Jack Hopkins, Reggie Farmer and Ed Smith. Ed fell off his bike and, as it transpired, fractured his arm. But the scouts responded to the emergency and then went on to win. Chief Scout's Gold Awards were achieved by Ben Pescud, Ben Mills, Matt Perman, Joe Dibley, Chris Smith, Mark Nickell and Nick Spence. Stu, Macca, Greg Catlin, Rob Scott, David Wheeler and Jamie Bennett won the County Kudu.

The Dads and Lads weekend for 2009 was a cycle ride to the 'Chicken Shed' at Dockenfield and cycling back the next day by a different route. Unfortunately just short of Basingstoke J's cycling came to an abrupt halt, literally, when he fell off his bike. In the summer Worting Leaders were nominated for a Basingstoke Pride of Place award, and although they didn't win, they were short listed and Tim and Gav represented the troop at the celebration dinner. Family Camp was at Tilford, a smart and well laid out camp outside Farnham with plenty of space for camping and games, and the River Wey for canoeing. The river was shallow enough that the older scouts could guide the younger ones who were able to get their first taste of canoeing. The young leaders set up a zip wire, but actually had more fun catapulting each other with the bungee cord. A small copse of pine trees provided an ideal space for those scouts who wanted to sleep out in hammocks, and the cook house was the focal point of the camp. On Saturday night Colin Scott received an award for 14 years as Worting Treasurer, and Mark Stevens, past Chairman and present Cub Leader, arranged a showing of Tim's ascent of Everest from a recently broadcast BBC documentary. Tim received a prolonged round of applause from a very proud troop. On Sunday was Family Camp 'It's a Knockout'. Four teams, the Rough Diamonds, the Night Clubs, the Aces of Spades and the Love Hearts battled it out for the glory of winning.

Summer camp was in a charmingly wooded, but damp and insect infested scout camp at the base of the Wrekin. The van was packed so finely that there was not a square foot of spare space. On the first night was a hike to the top of the Wrekin where Macca was injured in a challenge to see how many scouts could stand on a trig point (the answer for the curious is six). The next day was canoeing on the river Severn which was much swollen by the wet weather that set in for much of the week. Most evenings were cold and damp and so the traditional evening entertainments of hiking or wide games were replaced with many pleasant hours in the mess tent playing cards and pub games. On Monday the troop went to various museums in Ironbridge, ending the day at the swimming pool where Worting outnumbered the locals in number, volume and fun. On Tuesday the highlight of the week was a day long hike up The Lawley, with gusty winds and breathtaking views. On Wednesday morning the scouts visited Blist Hill the quite excellent Victorian village and an afternoon in Telford, quite a disappointing town particularly in heavy rain. On Thursday the scouts tackled the Long Mynd and on Friday was the mystery hike, where teams were dropped and had to make their way home. That evening was a barbeque in the woods below the Wrekin. It was cold and damp but despite this the most adventurous game of 40:40 in ever witnessed took place, with perilous leaps in the dusk, feral scouts leaping between trees, up slope and down, seeking to evade capture, Ryan Wilton being perhaps the most daring of all. Alex Miles was awarded Best Scout on Camp.

In the summer Matt Perman, Jack King, Will Scott, Monika, Reggie Farmer, Jack Hopkins, and Gav spent a weekend on the scout sailing ship Thermopylae in the Solent. After a day in the Solent they moored at Yarmouth harbour and had chips for tea. By the end of a full day sailing on Sunday they sailed back up the Hamble to moor up and clean ship. At the end of the summer Jack King, Jack Hopkins, Reggie Farmer, Merson Webb and Kurtis Eagle went on their Chief Scout's Expedition challenge along the Ridgeway from East Ilsley, stopping over night at the Streatley youth hostel, and then down the Thames and the Sulham Gap. Their presentation was very humorous, but perhaps not always intentionally so. It was noticed in the presentation slides that Reggie was wearing a cycling helmet and it had to be confessed that Jack Hopkins, the trip photographer, had forgotten to take his camera and his Dad had taken Reggie, and the two Jacks back with their bicycles a few weeks later to re-enact critical moments for the camera. They enjoyed that day too, ending up eating ice cream on the banks of the Thames at Pangbourne.

Worting came second at the District Orienteering, held on Greenham Common and Cyclorama was set in the countryside around Bramley and Silchester where the Worting team came second again. There was a weekend event of flint knapping with several good attempt at axes and arrowheads and the stone tools were put to practical test skinning a rabbit. Reggie cut his thumb and acquired the nick name 'Reggie four fingers'.

Remembrance service was the first held jointly with Winklebury and the church was packed to capacity and the scout guard alongside the memorial was very impressive.

The New Year 2010 ushered in a year-long celebration of the Worting troop's centenary. A ceremony to hand out the troop's centenary a badge was delayed due to heavy snow. The badges designed by Harrison Leavey were handed out by the Mayor, Brian Gurden who also presented the three centenary cups, one for each age group to compete for in the next 100 years. The Dads and Lads was a weekend walking on the South Downs Way. The first day was a hike along the ridge then dropping down to Bramber Castle. Here I bought an ice cream both on the way in and on the way out thus acquiring the nick name 'two scoops'. The end of the first day was at a scout camp called Hillside in Small Dole, where there was supper and wide games. The next day was a circular walk along the valley and up to the ridge at Devil's Dyke, and then back along the South Downs Way to the scout camp. It was a fine weekend and an introduction to hiking for many young scouts new to the troop. The centenary celebrations took on a scouting flavour with the Centenary Challenge, a hard weekend of cycling and canoeing. On Saturday morning the scouts set off along the Thames towpath near Hampton Court and, turning onto the Wey Navigation and then along the Basingstoke Canal as far as Runways End scout camp where tents were pitched and supper prepared. Some scouts hot from a hard days pedalling found time to lark around in the cool canal. The next day the party canoed to the Barley Mow at Winchfield, completing a very testing challenge. The 24<sup>th</sup> Basingstoke hosted a small contingent from Worting on their camp overnight. The hike there was very wet, but the hike back the next day was in glorious sunshine.

There was no family camp in centenary year as everyone concentrated on a Centenary party for past and present members of the troop, held in front of Worting House, making it an event to do justice to one hundred years of Worting scouting. At the entrance a large traditional scout camp gate was built and many friends of Worting were present including Lady Louisa Portal and Brian Gurden, the previous Mayor of Basingstoke. Tim Clark formally opened the event. As Worting's home grown hero whose achievements should inspire all scouts it was felt that there was no one better placed to represent Worting's achievements. The County Commissioner, Adam Jollans, said a few words about Worting Group's special family character and the Mayor Keith Chapman, also spoke, encouraging us all to recognise that our sense of community and contributing to community life was valuable, and that his own time with scouts had stayed with him. Mike Webb from District closed the speeches with some well-chosen and kind words about Worting and its local character. The Chairman, Mark Beck, called on everyone to dance and a barn dance was soon in full swing, young and old, past and present, scout and family, celebrating one hundred years together. The cooks soon turned out hot food and pudding was donated by everyone. At the end of the celebrations Neil Macintosh, the Group Scout Leader, said some well-earned thank-yous and had some thoughts for the troop. Take advantage of the opportunities that will be

presented to you in your time with Worthing scouts. Carpe Deum, Seize the Day. And he reminded us that if Carlsberg made Scout Groups they would make Worthing, probably the best Scout Group in the world.

Summer camp was at Snapper just outside Barnstaple in Devon, with the tents pitched in a meadow by a small stream. On the first night there was a river walk, where some got wetter than others and a few stayed completely dry. Some of the Explorers cycled to summer camp over several days which was an extraordinary achievement. On the Sunday was a hike on Exmoor which ended with an ice cream. There was day hiking from Waters Meet to Lynton and Lynmouth, where lunch was taken on the green and where award winning ice cream could be purchased. In the afternoon the scouts hiked along the coast to the Valley of the Rocks, where Gav's instincts for the high road and the mountain goat tendency of the scouts was fully explored. The hike ended at the truly charming little cove called Woody Bay, where the scouts relaxed. One cool evening found the scouts swimming in the breakers at Woolacombe under the watchful eye of a lifeguard. The waves were quite large and great fun was had bracing against them or body surfing towards the shore. Twice the troop went cycling on different sections of the Tarka Trail. On camp there was plenty to do and there were several evenings of football against neighbouring troops and dam building in the river, as well as climbing walls and some tunnels. One the last day there was mystery hike with teams navigating back to camp from different directions, and on the last evening had a barbeque on the beach with wide games on the sand, and whilst the breeze lent a slightly chilly air, everyone had great fun. By coincidence the Chairman of the local scout district was walking his dog and was kind enough to stop, say hello and welcome the scouts to the area. Best Scout on Camp was Aaron Potter.

It was a very wet October weekend that found the scouts spending the night on HMS Belfast in London. The 'Kip on a Ship' expedition was a logistical challenge to get almost the whole troop across London on the underground. After dropping kit off on the boat the troop made good time to get to Greenwich in time to see the red ball time signal on the observatory fall. There was a wet and dark tour of the Royal Parks and the Mall, past Buckingham Palace. On the ship the ratings accommodation was a very welcome break at the end of a long day of hiking on pavements. The next morning was an opportunity to explore the ship and to tell the scouts about Sefton Diddam's service on a ship very much like HMS Belfast. This was made somewhat poignant as Sefton, one of Worthing troop's young wartime leaders, had died only a few weeks earlier. At lunchtime the scouts looked around the Tate Modern art gallery, where their dismissive art critiques seemed frequently apt.

Whilst doing conservation work at the Old Basing fishponds the Worthing scouts rediscover a the remnants of a wall covered in bramble which we were told was in the records but had been lost for years. All concerned were very pleased with themselves

for making an exciting discovery. This year the scout's winter teat was to go to JJ's the fun house and have an evening of fun on the slides and climbing areas. Leaders too joined in, in particular testing their nerves against the long drop slides.

The centenary year's celebrations came to a close with a traditional Christmas party, with the scouts, cubs and beavers enjoying party food at long tables, served by the leaders, and entertained the whole while. There were many presentations and words of thanks from the Group Scout Leader, who reflected not only on the 100 years of Worthing Scouts, but on the present generation of scouts and scout leaders. A celebration cake was cut, which had been made by Mrs Harwood. The icing decoration which made up a camping scene was a work of art. The party brought the centenary celebrations to a close. Everyone who had contributed to the events throughout the year had done so to ensure that we would leave a memory fitting for such an achievement. It was well done, in Worthing style.

## **The Closing Chapter**

As the centenary year draws to a close the Worthing Scout Group looks forward to the next 100 years which will no doubt throw up challenges and opportunities. The object, to quote the Rev Summers, remains to develop true citizenship, training the physical, the mental and the moral powers of the young. Scouting in general and Worthing in particular does this through a practical, challenging and fun programme. In 2010 the Church, who in so many ways have supported the troop, sold the land on which the hut stands leaving a less certain future. Whilst it was disheartening news, the support of the community, the commitment of the leaders and the Executive Committee, the enthusiasm of the parents and the spirit of the scouts were all revealed. It appears that our next hundred years starts with a challenge. But if it proves to be that we have a mountain to climb, Worthing Scout Group are the ones to do that.

**Addendum**

Since this volume was completed we have had our one hundred and first year and with modern technology we can up-date our history as a living record.

## 2011

The year was as usual a busy mixture of hut and hikes, badges and fun, but with highlights that stand out above the rest. In the spring the scouts undertook a cycle ride from Bath to Wales, spending the night in the youth hostel at Bristol. The weather was beautiful and Bristol was great fun, particularly the @Bristol activity centre and the evening walk where Ed Hack entertained scouts and passers-by alike with his free running skills. The second day of cycling took us over the Severn Bridge to have our photograph under the 'welcome to Wales' sign and then home.

The Parent and Offspring weekend (previously known as Lads and Dads), was a hike across the downs to Box Hill and then everyone under canvas for the night to give the Dads an idea of the life of the scouts on camp. The presence of a girls school DOE Expedition on the adjacent pitch gave an additional interest to the older scouts. On another weekend an activity day at Fernycrofts was organised, with team building, climbing, crate stacking, assault course and wide games. It was great fun, but very hot.

The day trip to Diamond Light at Harwell proved to be a great day out. The staff at the particle accelerator kept the scouts absolutely fascinated; what it was, how it worked and how they used it (one example was to find out why a batch of chocolate tasted funny). Particular facts that went down very well were the sensitivity of the machine to earth movement meaning that a scout jumping up and down by the machinery would register and that if you were accidentally in the machine when it was turned a terrible fate awaited.

The hut weekend, cycling, canoeing, geocaching and winter camp have all featured in the years activities. Of the caving Aaron and Joel wrote "Our destination was the Singing River Mine, in Shipham. We had to wear suits to keep us dry, wellies and a belt (this was to pull us out if we got stuck.) and of course a helmet with a light. The entrance to the Singing River Mine was a small hole the size of a drain cover and we went down 11 metres on a wire rope ladder in to the cave. It was dark and there were narrow passages into the caves and lots of dead ends. There was a 6 way passage and we had to find a stone diving board at the bottom underneath this was water. We also had to cross a wooden plank to get to the other side. It was a very, very, long climb back up".

Worting have performed well in the district competitions, winning the orienteering (getting the trophy back from Overton who won in 2010) and the district incident hike and doing well in the cooking competition (but beaten by a worthy Winklebury team). They also won the Cyclorama at Greenham Common. It was well attended by scout and family teams, and was very enjoyable for being off road. The Worting scout team that won back the trophy from Overton were Brandon, Susie and the LG (Life's Good) Twins, Aaron and Joel. (For the record the overall winners were at Cyclorama and Orienteering were the 'Worting Classics' team, which shows that age and experience can sometimes be an effective combination).

Family Camp was very well attended, possible the best attended ever. The usual activities such as archery, sumo wrestling, canoeing, climbing and the ever popular rockets activity were all enjoyed. The cooking team did exceptionally well and on Sunday for the second year an 'It's a Knockout Competition' was held to have some good old fashion fun.

As always the big event of the year was the summer camp, this year was closer to home than usual, at Youlbury near Oxford. "The world's oldest permanent scout camp" - we learnt at the on-site museum. Youlbury was selected for the activities that were available on site, most of which we had a go at; Zip Wire, Crate Stacking, Jacob's Ladder, The 3G Swing, Aerial Walkway, Leap of Faith, Climbing Wall and Abseiling. We were also able to get in half a day's sailing at nearby Farmoor Reservoir. This still left plenty of time for Worting adventures. We had a hot day cycling, following a circular route downhill into Oxford, along the Thames to Abingdon, and then back up hill to the camp and a day out in Oxford, cycling there and back, and spending more (and less) time in the Pitt Rivers museum. The Pitt Rivers is a gem of a museum and everyone enjoyed it, but a few stayed in all afternoon, peering into cabinets to see shrunken heads etc.. That evening we were bused down into Oxford and spent the evening in a lovely outdoor pool, whose cool waters were very welcome on a baking hot evening. We frolicked around and were the last to leave.

There was a treasure hunt hike in the countryside, using navigation skills to find caches of sweets. The mystery hike on the last day ended at an outdoor pool in Abingdon, and the traditional last evening barbeque, which was beside the Thames. The food was excellent, but it always is when you are outdoors and working hard. It did rain a couple of times quite hard, the events shelters were ideal, but a small stream formed and flowed through the GSL's tent. The best scout on camp was a joint award to Andy Lake and Sam Stevens, and Brandon Collins won the Nash trophy as he well deserved.

Towards the end of the year was the Great London Scout Challenge, which was a navigating and treasure hunting day in London. One task was to bring back something that was traffic light red. One Worting team came back with an actual red traffic light lens (all legal and above board). The year ended with the traditional visit to Aldershot ski centre to go doughnutting, where even cold damp conditions did not suppress the fun.

## 2012

In 2012 Worting St Thomas were to lead the St George's day parade, which brought with it many additional duties associated with organising the parade. Milestones Museum was booked, the Tadley Concert band and the 'scout message', usually a small play, because of the limited space was a film. But the troop was determined to make the Worting St Thomas St George's Day parade one to remember. This took time and effort from everyone. In the weeks running up to the event the troop practiced the hymns and their marching. The scout play was 'Scouts versus Dragons', a humorous tale of a match against scouts with scout values against a dragon whose stock in trade was boredom and mischief. The dragon was built from an old patrol tent at Hut Weekend, which really went well, lots of ideas and enthusiasm. The play was filmed but on the day of the parade 'she' circulated through the cubs and beavers and caused great excitement. After the parade the scouts were allowed to look around Milestones and as a result the collection for Jack's Place was possibly the highest achieved.

At the same time the troop were also preparing for the cycling trip on the Isle of Wight, which took place the weekend before St George's day. The scenery was spectacular (as one would hope given the height climbed) as the troop cycled from Cowes to the Needles, over the downs and to Brighstone. We also found time to play on the beach. The scout HQ where we slept was great. The local scout leader we met in the park was really nice, but the local farmer who shouted at us for a minor navigation error, was a bit harsh.

The scouts have done well in district competition, winning the Night Hike where Worting came first and second, and the Orienteering. The latter was on a very wet day at Butterwood, so doubly well done. Later in the year the girls team, Charlie Smith, Holly Firrel and Kirsten Hopkins, won the district cooking competition and the Worting boys team also did well and came third. The cyclorama competition at Greenham common was won by the very deserving team from Overton.

The two oldest scouts Andy Lake and Aaron Potter joined the Explorers on an expedition to Snowdonia in May, where they climbed Snowdon and Tryfan, as well as a quick skip around the Glydders. The Group Scout Leader tripped and fell, but his progress was checked by J who was in the way. Another Worting legend was born that grows with each telling. It was a memorable weekend for the explorers and leaders, but particularly for the two scouts who really excelled. Both were awarded their Chief Scouts Gold award by the end of the year, as was Brandon Collins.

J's Jubilee Jaunt was a long hike across some of Hampshire's prettiest scenery, well done those who came along. The trip included a very enjoyable paddle in the Itchen. Older scouts also went to Winter Camp, a weekend of activities at Lyons Copse. In the

evenings we have packed the time with games, and map and badge work, and yet also found time to have an indoor games evening at Stratton Park HQ, an outdoor games evening at Hatch Warren, an evening cycle ride from Abbotstone Down to Beggarwood, a night hike at Ellisfield, orienteering in Morgaston Wood, incident games at the Lime Pits, swimming at Cranbourne, a sausage sizzle in Middle Copse and making pancakes (and blue smoke) at the hut. Two teams did their Expedition Challenge on the South Downs and the whole troop had the pleasure of watching their presentations. The use of IT by both teams was exceptional, with one team in particular doing an excellent spoof documentary. The summer term ended with a BBQ on the canal and messing about on the water with the canoes. In the autumn there was a night hike with chips at the end and on another night Greg arranged a visit of a collection of reptiles who created quite a stir. The autumn hut weekend included setting up an aerial and radio and listening in and talking to radio hams across the country, which was very enjoyable. The troop also planted trees for the Jubilee Copse in Kempshott and later did a days conservation work at Danebury with FOAM

But the year also included several other major adventures. In June the troop cycled across London to see the various Olympic venues under construction. It was great fun (if hard work) and everybody enjoyed themselves. The route bought us down the Lea valley from Waltham Cross at a leisurely pace due to a couple of punctures, where we saw the kayak stadium. The lunch stop was right under the flight path for the changing the guard and so saw every type of aircraft processing across the sky. The troop got down to the scout HQ at Stepney in time to rush straight out the city farm over the road. The Scout HQ named the Roland Philips Centre after the man who got the local HQ off the ground but shortly after was killed in the First World War - but his name lives on. In the evening we cycled out to Greenwich to look at the horse riding stadium below the observatory. But it did mean eating late. After a delicious tea, of which nothing was left over, the scouts went to bed. The HQ was very warm and J slept outside on the doorstep and Chrissie accidentally locked him out. But he was still there in the morning so no harm done.

On Sunday the route followed the Regents canal and lunch was at Camden market, where the scouts got to choose from the many little hot food stands. It was the most cosmopolitan lunch break we have ever had. Then onwards across London, through the parks, past memorials and so to Buckingham palace. Then we cycled down the Mall. We passed the volley ball court, passed Westminster Minster and the Houses of Parliament, and then along the Thames path, mostly by the river, but it was like the Italian job cycling through alleyways and court yards, and so to Putney our destination. But at Putney a final treat, the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, was just coming in from rowing, and the scouts offered to help carry his canoe (although only Susie Perman had the courage to actually step forward). Nick Clegg then kindly came back out and spoke to

the scouts, which was very kind of him, and something that perhaps in later years they will recall as a very special memory.

Family camp was in June at Garners Field again and was very well attended. As always the cooking was big hit and the whole weekend was filled with fun and activity, such as canoeing, the climbing wall, water rockets, and much more. The AGM on Saturday was a little interrupted by the very talkative girls in the next field, but some of the scouts could see some advantages to camping close to such neighbours so all was well. Sunday was It's a Knockout which was great fun. The speeches over ran but the tent packing was the fastest and most efficient yet.

Summer camp was as always the big event of the year. With the summer in full swing it was an early start to stay ahead of the traffic, although this meant that the troop arrived in time to start their Dorset trip with a visit to Tyneham, coming back later in the afternoon to set up the tents. When all was set up and supper had been eaten they all set off for Swanage for a walk along the sea front, and as darkness fell a fantastic fire work display. Sunday was a day of coast walking. Coming down off a high hill we hiked along the heavily undulating coast, stopping above Chapman Cove to have lunch and watch the Red Arrows. Then we went down into the cove to paddle in the cool sea water. After lunch we visited a stunning 12<sup>th</sup> century chapel; were invited into the coast guards look out to watch the Weymouth Olympic seaward security; visited a quarry with breath taking man made caves and then cooled our feet on Dancing ledge. And we still had time for a delicious ice cream at Worth Maltravers by the village pond.

Monday was the big cycle event of the week, a cycle ride to Lulworth cove, a day on the beach and the cycle ride back. The long dusty ride was broken at Wool for a raid on the cake shop, and then at Lulworth we bathed (sun and sea), looked for fossils and generally relaxed. On Tuesday we went by train to Weymouth. The Olympic crowds we had been warned about did not materialise and at times we had much of the beach to ourselves, under the watchful eye of the life guards. Close by was an arena where the scouts could try different sports for free as part of the Olympic event, there was the end of the pier show, which had views of the sailing, as well as live music. We returned to camp by train, sun kissed and happy, and for some there were energetic wide games in the dark, for others just a sit down and cup of hot chocolate

On Wednesday we were whisked away to Monkey World, with all the jokes about which of the scouts would be mistaken for a monkey and left behind. Then in the afternoon we were back to camp to the lake. There was canoeing for the fun of it and also to collect the pond weed, which was the conservation task. Fun was also had 'water skimming', the topical Olympic water event where you run so fast and yet step so lightly you can run across water. It took many amusing leg flailing splashes before the victims realised they had been pranked. After tea we went back out and hiked across the back of Durdle Door in the pitch dark to see the glow worms. It is a true spectacle of nature. But it was

late night for everyone and we were allowed a lie in the next morning. On Thursday morning, was bike treasure hunt (stashed secret sweetie pods all around the local area). We were also able to stop and pay homage at Lawrence of Arabia's grave and see the lovely church close by, where a local scout leader remarked at how well behaved Worting scouts were. The end of the afternoon was available for relaxing for those who wanted and another session of canoeing for those with energy to spare.

On Friday morning we were off again, this time to Bovington Tank museum. The young leaders got very close to the tanks when they volunteered to be the attacking force at the lunch time display. The local tanks went toe to toe with an invading force, but the day was won when a tracked armoured troop carrier disgorged a platoon of young leaders who 'rushed and fired' 'rushed and fired' until they were able to pull down the enemy flag. In the afternoon was the mystery hike. Small groups led by young leaders were dropped off around the area with the task of making it to Kimmeridge Bay for an evening barbeque. They all successfully arrived and cooked their tea, and we sat and watched the sun go down and felt the cold air dropping on us, before we went back to our cosy tents and a cup of hot chocolate.

Saturday morning was breaking camp, but this was made a little easier this year as the Explorers were taking over the pitch from us and many of the tents were staying. Jack Hopkins, attending as a young leader, was awarded the James Nash trophy, and was best scout on camp was joint award to Susie Perman and Charlie Haslam.

The last expedition of the year was in September, and Dads and Lads canoeing trip down the Kennet and Avon canal. The scouts paddled from Newbury to Hungerford where they stayed at the Croft Field Centre. On Sunday they pressed on to the Croton pumping engine, which many years previously Worting scouts had helped to conserve. They were shown round by a knowledgeable guide who said he could recall the Worting scouts who helped dig out the old pump, had a hearty tea in the tea shop and went home happy.

The end of year was bag packing for fund raising and JJ's as the treat, where laser quest as great hit. And so to the end of 2012

## **2013**

As usual the year was marked by a wide range of meetings and activities in and around the hut and outdoors, with badge work, skills, games, night hikes, expeditions and cycling. The first hut weekend was marked by an excellent pioneering project by Stuart MacFarlane (a bridge over the garden fence) which the scouts enjoyed making and took pride in having built, as well as the fun in using it. The troop attended the County Winter Camp at Lyons Copse which was one of the coldest we could remember. The district St George's day was in the town centre and although the troop was fewer in number than usual they were smart and noticeably disciplined.

The District Orienteering competition scout trophy was won by 'Worting Elite', an experienced team of Aaron and Joel Lewis-Grey and Tabitha Potter. A young (recently ex cub) team also went out and came a very good third. Later in the year the Worting team were beaten by an excellent Overton team at the District Cyclorama competition, but won the District Cooking competition at the end of the year, well done to Isaac Reeves, Amber Tavener and Harry Hollingsworth.

A one star canoe course was run by Gav who also led a day out canoeing on the river Wey. There were also two opportunities to go caving and there were places on a local scuba diving course. The troop sent a small group of scouts on an archaeological excavation at Colemore in the spring and in the autumn, looked after by the Liss Archaeological Group who were very welcoming. The scouts really enjoyed the digging and the discovery of Roman artefacts. There was a Spring Cycle Adventure to Alresford and back, with an overnight stop, and the troop continues to support and work with the Friends of Ancient Monuments (FOAM) and did projects at Danebury and Odiham Castle. Rob and Philippa ran a survival weekend at Middle Copse (or camping with minimal equipment) which was very much enjoyed by those who attended, who built their own overnight shelters and cooked their meals over the bonfire. The summer term ended with a barbeque and canoes at Colt Hill and having good weather this time there was lots of splashing and water fun sustained by hot sausages, the scout staple.

The Duck Race, which is an important fund raiser, was a good chance for family fun in the pub garden by the river, and was well attended. Family camp at Tilford, with a Pirate Theme, was another 'fine example' of a family scout event, with archery, canoeing, climbing wall, water rockets and much more. The parents were also involved in the 'Parent and Offspring' (latterly Lads and Dads) which was a hike in the Quantocks. It was a very hot weekend and the hiking was from pool of shade to pool of shade. J and Kirsten humped a billy of water on to the top of the moors which was looked at very enviously by other scouts sheltering in the same shade. The hike ended at the seaside, where fossils were found (but so large as to remain attached to the beach) and ice cream was indulged in.

Summer Camp was at the Jamborette at Kernow in Cornwall. It was very enjoyable and a very tiring week for all. The food was excellent, with many thanks to Joe Dibley and Greg Caitlin for their hard work, and the site had plenty to offer in activities. Overall it was a great experience, with evening entertainment every evening, cultural and physical activities, hiking and water sport. The scouts met lots of others from around England and a few from around the world. Worting scouts and leaders stood out as good examples of scouting and there is plenty to be proud of. It was certainly very worth while joining a Jamborette, but a traditional Worting Summer camp is perhaps more challenging for the scouts and more of an opportunity to test themselves. The Best Scout on Camp was a joint award to Xander Yarney and Isaac Reeves for their commitment to the camp, and Susie Perman won the Nash Trophy for her care of the younger scouts.

In the autumn there was a canoeing trip down the Thames in Canadian canoes, 'a trip through history' from Dorney to Staines. It was a very tiring but very enjoyable day. Particularly of note was the splendid performance put in by Ed Bolton who did a 'man's job' all day. We passed the rowing lake with its Olympic and archaeological history, Windsor and Runnymede. Several memorials were visited at Runnymede (Kennedy and Magna Carta, and we could see the memorial to airmen with no known grave, on the skyline). A trip led by Gavin Clark narrow boating on the Grand Union Canal a couple of weeks earlier was more leisurely but very enjoyable too.

The autumn hut weekend had plenty to do including a treasure hunt, DIY, IT skills, a pioneering project, as well as hut maintenance including some impromptu roofing repair due to the previous week's storm. Fireworks on bonfire night with sausages in a bun was great fun and there was Christmas party at the end of the year. Also at the end of the year was the traditional pleasure and pain combination of fund raising at Sainsbury's, who as always were very kind (as were a fireman's choir who were there at the same time and gave us the money they raised) and a troop night at J J's.

The troop has, as before, been well supported by the leaders, Gavin and Chrissie Clark, Tim Clark, David Hopkins, Rob and Phillipa, Stuart MacFarlane, Greg Caitlin and Neil Macintosh, but has also seen two young leaders Jack Hopkins and Liam Griffiths really making a big difference to the troops meetings.

The troop ends the year quite new and young. A lot of big characters have moved on to Explorers this year, including, Xander, the Shaw twins, the Life's Good Twins Aaron and Joel, the Haslam bothers, Susie Perman, Ed Bolton, Harrison Leavey, George Dibley, Brandon Collins and Andy Lark. This remarkable generation of scouts leaves a big gap, but a gap for the new young ones to grow into and fill.

## 2014

The new year started with a number of hut evenings that combined badge work with games, meetings and education. J was tasked with making 'Risk Assessment' fun, which he achieved using examples from the Darwin Awards. Stuart ran a 'building things' evening, Rob and Phillippa developed team work through games, and there was the 'Games evening' which included that old classic shove Ha' penny, along with darts, pool, table tennis and much more. Of course spring included blue smoke night when an entire evening was given over to making and eating pancakes of different size, flavour, consistency and toppings. There was a swimming evening with thanks as usual to Ashleigh Smith for keeping us safe. An evening of navigation by clues to find a prize was organised in Memorial Park and we had an 'incident' evening at the Lime Pits for the 'after dark torch lit problem solving' experience. There have been a couple of night hikes, one in the deep dark around the fields at Oakley, another on a fine light evening around Hackwood Park, an Easter egg hunt around Crabtree Planation, an evening of wide games at Middle Copse, an evening of field games at Down Grange, an evening of Geo cache hunting and a cycle ride from Overton when the summer long evenings arrived. Plenty of outdoor fun to counter balance the indoor activities.

There were other activities such a canoe course and a scuba diving course. Only three scouts took up the offer of caving in May, but they all enjoyed their day out. There was a day at an archaeological excavation with the Liss Archaeological Society where the scouts got a chance to trowel and sieve to find things, did finds washing and finds processing, and were shown around the whole site. The survival weekend at Middle Copse was great fun and a (retired) RAF pilot recounted his 'survival training'. It was a weekend of back to basics, back woods cooking and shelter building.

The St George's Day parade was very wet, but Worting were well turned out and the scouts marched neatly without coats to cover their uniform. But by contrast the Duck race was a beautiful day of sunshine, just right for a pub garden and messing about in a river. "The sun shines on the righteous" or "the devil looks after his own".

The parent and offspring challenge was truly testing bike ride from Hampton Court to Basingstoke, with an overnight stop at Runways End. Many of the riders had got sponsorship for the Shelter Box appeal and that was a big step forward in the fund raising. Several of the leaders remembered with a smile that last time we cycled this route a scout went off the tow path and into the canal. This year at exactly the same spot James Lyness did an involuntary re-enactment but managed a smile when a sympathetic onlooker from another cycle event gave him a dry London to Brighton tee-shirt that implied he had successfully completed that event too. The end of the summer term was marked by the traditional barbeque at Colt Hill, with a trip up the canal in the canoes. Family Camp was at Tilford, this year with a Cowboy theme, and with Sherborne

cubs (and families) invited to join us. It was another great family event with excellent cooking from Jayne Lewis Grey and her team, and with a weekend packed with activities.

Summer Camp was at Miskin Mill in South Wales and with the Brecons close at hand it was great fun for all involved. The camp site was lovely, with its own river and generous washing facilities. The train line that ran down the side of the camp was a constant distraction but the scouts turned it into a game and it soon receded into the background of consciousness. Through the week several days were spent on site doing pioneering, building a bridge over the river, making hammocks, sleeping out, cooking on camp fires and exploring the river, as well as camp fire singing with another troop on site. The food was excellent thanks to Greg and his 'shadow' Katie Hossick. There were also challenging trips out, a cycle ride to Cardiff and back which turned out to be a pedal too far for the scouts except for Dylan who got all the way to the end with the Explorers. Unfortunately our welcome to Cardiff was marred by a couple of the bikes being stolen, despite being safely locked up. It was nice to have so many Worting Explorers on site which made it a lot more fun for the scouts who enjoyed having the older scouts there. There was trip up Pen Y Fan in the Brecon Beacons, the highest point in south wales, which was full and enjoyable day out in the hills. With a big well done for Oceiah who, as a very newly joined hill walker stuck to it like glue.

There was a day at the mining museum, which was very informative as well as involved going underground. The museum was splendid and everyone enjoyed it and the day ended with a trip down the sweetie aisle at Tesco's. Part of another day was spent at the beach. Perhaps the highlight of the week was the waterfall walk, which took us up a valley of waterfalls and along a path that ran behind a waterfall, where the Life's Good twins were invested into Explorers. Oceiah was invested on that walk as well, at a point where Gavin and the Explorers could jump off the edge into the stream in celebration. But everyone who wanted to jumped into the freezing cold plunge pool in front of the waterfall.

Suzie Perman, now an Explorer, very much took on a matriarchal role with the girls, and there was a pamper session one night for the girls which strangely resulted in Gav having his toe nails painted a vivid blue. A more masculine evening was a laser quest game in the on-site woods, which was enjoyed by everyone and was real adrenaline rush. The traditional last evening beach barbeque didn't quite go so well, and ended up being relocated to the mess tent, a mixture of poor weather and some scouts failing to take coats and jumpers as instructed. The best scout on camp was Katie Hossick and the Nash Award went to Kirsten Hopkins.

On the first night back of the Autumn term the troop council concentrated on the scout law and scout behaviours, to give the scouts some reference points to what will disappoint the leaders. The following weeks involved a treasure hunt across Basingstoke

town, which challenged their team working ability; a night at the hut studying practical navigation and an evening navigation exercise locally with the aim of getting back to the hut whilst avoiding zombies. Between those two meetings there was the Basingstoke Canoe Challenge for those with the skills to raise money for charity. There followed a night time orienteering exercise in Morgaston Woods, which included all teams meeting at the hide for Morgan Smith to be invested. The cold edge was taken off the evening by a bag of chips at the end. The skills for that night were put into practice on the Sunday at the district orienteering event, organised by Gav. It was a lovely day and well supported and the Worting teams did well coming third and fourth.

Worting reached the target for a shelter box thanks to the fund raising efforts of the troop. At the very end of the year we learnt that our shelter box had been deployed to Kurdistan in Iraq where refugees from the fighting in that area were facing a long cold winter.

The hut evenings turned to a culinary theme, with ready steady cook where teams made innovative dishes from the same set of ingredients. It was also a well-honed lesson from Chrissie about budgeting, the ingredients supplied made a meal at 32p per head. The following week was the troop cooking competition the winners earning the right to represent Worting at the district cooking competition. There were some very tasty dishes produced, although were an acquired taste. The Worting teams, the 'Americans' and the 'Mexicans', came second and fourth in the District cooking competition pipped at the post by a single point by Kempshott. That Sunday a small team of scouts were away for another day at the Liss Archaeology Groups excavations digging at a Roman villa and having a go at Geophysics

The hut weekend was as always jam packed, and combined badge work, fun and hut maintenance. There was very good showing of parents who turned up on Saturday and Sunday, as getting the hut weather tight had become quite urgent. There was painting inside and out and the ceiling brought down by a leak was repaired. Trying to sort out a trip hazard in the garden Rob found an old water cistern, which will forever be remembered as "Rob's Hole" but which is now safely back filled. On Saturday night J brought in some World War One artefacts and explained the open meeting that was taking place the following Thursday as the troop's commemoration of the centenary of WWI. He called for volunteers to read out small biographies for the men on the Worting war memorial. After an introduction to public speaking almost all of the scouts volunteered, which was very brave.

Ahead of Remembrance Sunday the Worting Scout Troop presented the results of their research in to the names on the Worting war memorial with an invitation to scouts, family and the local community to join them at the scout hut. On Thursday evening the hut was filled to capacity and tea and cake was served by the scouts to their guests. Scout Leader David Hopkins (J) presented a fascinating talk about the role of scouts in

the First World War, and read from the report in the Basingstoke Gazette, 1915, describing how the Worting scouts won their war badges. But the main event of the evening was a brief biography of the names on the Worting war memorial, each one read out by a scout. "It was important that one hundred years on we could give a glimpse of the lives behind the names". The research and the evening were part of the troop's centenary commemoration. The scout readers were every single one, impressive. The Remembrance Sunday parade was well attended, and with excellent respect and behaviour shown making the leaders very proud of the troop. This year when the names were read out a pause was allowed for Ben Wall to read a one line biography for each one (having been selected by the Vicar's wife after his reading on Thursday night).

The Group had its Bonfire night at Middle Copse, with a sausage sizzle and a fine fire work display – well done Greg Catlin and his team. On the Saturday 38 Worting scouts and adults travelled up to London for the Big London Scouts Challenge, which was a fantastic, albeit tiring, day out in the nation's capital. The overall winners were the 'caffeine deprived' Worting Adults' team. The best Worting scout team were 'Gav's Goers' who came fifth overall. There followed a Thursday evening at Crabtree Plantation seeing out glow-in-the-dark targets, much easier to find with your torch off, but that didn't stop the torch proud scouts lighting up the sky like search lights on a night from the blitz. In November a small group went with FOAM to Odiham Castle. It was a special event as they were helping to get it ready for next year's 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta when the castle will be a county focus of celebration. They did well and worked hard and rewarded themselves with a spa day in the mud of the moat at the end.

We had an evening decorating ceramics in part thanks to a very generous donation from Mr and Mrs. Mills who were touched by the Worting scouts remembering their great Uncle, Earnest Mills, who died in the First World War and is on the Worting War Memorial. There was the scout Christmas party, an evening of sugar fuelled fun. As usual the end of year pleasure pain combination, of bag packing and a fun night out at JJ's. Bag packing was very successful, with a good turn out and even a bit of carol singing. JJ's was the usual festival of larks as well as laser quest, where Stuart got stuck in with enthusiasm.

We have lost some more big characters to Explorers who will be missed, and we are also missing our young leaders. Liam Griffiths went off to University and Jack Hopkins can only now come to scouts when he is not working.

### **The Nash Award**

The Nash Award is awarded each summer camp to that scout who has shown the most care and concern for others. The Worting history has not been consistent in recording

how has received this award and so now might be a good time to offer a complete list to date.

Phil Allen	2007
Andy Humberstone	2008
Matt Perman	2009
Rory Bethell	2010
Brandon Collins	2011
Jack Hopkins	2012
Suzanne Perman	2013
Kirsten Hopkins	2014



## 2015

Throughout the year the scouts enjoyed a wide range of evening activity, as they always do, with games, tasks, visitors, cooking, crafts and forums, as well as hikes, wide games, swimming, canoeing and a makeshift water slide at Down grange on a hot summer evening. Glass engraving has been added to the creative output this year. The visitors included a Group Captain and also a trainer for Guide dogs for the blind, and a hike from Silchester to the Vyne with the County Archaeologist. And thanks to the Kingsclere bell ringers who shared their bell ringing enthusiasm. Gav and Stuart also ran a paddle power course for those scouts acquiring a canoeing proficiency.

There was another chance to try archaeology in the spring and in the autumn, joining in the excavation, cleaning finds and even trying out the geophysical equipment, thanks to the Liss Archaeology Group.

The hut weekends, one per term, were the usual varied activities both indoors and out, practical and recreational and in particular keeping the roof weather tight which proved to be a wet year. However at the end of the year funds were found to recover the roof and give it many more years of service.

There was an Expedition Challenge for 8 of the older scouts in April with two teams spending the weekend in Dorset hiking from Pocklington Hill to Lulworth, camping over night at Lulworth Castle and then hiking to Kings Barrow. The scenery was stunning and the weather was kind. A few weeks later they presented their expeditions to the whole troop.

The St Georges Day event was planned by district at the Anvil with entertainment and competitions for all ages. Worting was well represented and organised. Kirsten Hopkins abseiled from the ceiling to wild applause, the scouts won their competition and some of the leaders did well in the leaders dance off.

The Cyclorama organised by Worting was an enjoyable afternoon well supported by Worting families, and the Worting scouts were the overall scout winners. The District night time 'incident' hike was won by Worting, and later in the year the district cooking competition was attended by a very young Worting team, who did very well against more seasoned competitors but without a trophy this time.

In May there was an excellent weekend on Brownsea Island, a bit of a scouting pilgrimage, staying in the South Lodge. The scouts were able to enjoy al fresco meals, and watch the red squirrels chase in the garden. The peacocks were almost tame. It was good weather and a lovely place to be, as well as seeing some interesting things and doing fun activities with the island rangers. In the evening Greg told the scouts a story

about the escape of “Speedosh Schimalot” a mass murderer from an asylum on a neighbouring island, to more amusement than horror.

Then at the end of May was the fund raising duck race, which was a lovely day again, and saw lots of scouts helping in the river. It was also an opportunity for the families to get together.

Early in June was the parent and offspring adventure along the Kennet and Avon canal between Newbury and Crofton pumping station, staying overnight at the Hungerford scout hut. It was a very hot weekend and there was a good mix of hiking, laughing and canoeing. Crofton opened especially for the scouts, which was very kind and a very well informed volunteer showed us around.

Later in June a small group of scouts helped with car parking at Manydown Farm in return for a donation to the Shelterbox fund and the full sum needed was gathered later in the summer by a car boot sale organised by Katie Hossick and Kirsten Hopkins, making it their third shelter box.

The survival camp at Middle Copse was a lesson on how much time you have to spend on shelter and food when you don’t have the modern world. Mike Webb, the District Commissioner, visited the camp and played the role of ‘injured rambler’ to test the scouts’ reaction to an emergency.

Family camp, with a super heroes theme, was at Tilford again, with archery, canoeing, climbing, abseiling and a wide range of games for the whole family.

Summer Camp this year was at Broadstone Warren, a scout activity centre near Forest Row, balancing the reduced travel budget with having some activities provided on site by the scout association. The scouts were dropped off and approached the camp on foot for the last few miles. The campsite was a sylvan glade in an extensive wood with no one else camping close by. On Sunday morning the scouts had onsite activity called ‘the cube’, a large metal cube structure higher than a house attached to which were all types of vertigo inducing challenges. In the afternoon there were team building challenges a tyre stacking logic exercise, crossing an imaginary river with almost too little equipment, a giant spiders web and a balancing task which relied on a bit of obscure knowledge that had by chance been shared by Greg at a recent hut weekend. The end of the afternoon was a climbing activity where everyone had as many goes as they wanted climbing an artificial coconut tree.

Monday was an all-day circular 17 km hike around Ashdown Forest, Winnie the Pooh country. The high hills, woods and heath allowed some stunning views in places; but the best view of all being the ice cream van mid-afternoon. Tuesday was an on-site activity day again, based on the low ropes course. There was plenty of time for everyone to have

a go followed by timed team races. In the afternoon the troop went swimming at a local pool.

On Wednesday was a trip to the aquarium in Brighton, with a day in the town, on the pier, on the beach and in the sea. The sea was lovely once you were in! Thursday it was very wet. Water flowed under the tents in small streams, and the scouts got soaked as they did crate stacking in the morning and Worting broke the course record for height, but the cube was out of bounds during the lightning storm and so there were indoor activities instead. Tuesday and Thursday small groups of scouts learnt fencing skills.

On Friday was a visit to a llama farm, where the llama farmer allowed the scouts to take some of the llamas for a walk around the farm. From the farm the scouts hiked back to camp. In the evening we had a barbeque on camp, where we were joined by Monica from Switzerland driven post haste from Gatwick by Macca. Saturday was last day on camp but we didn't have to do much putting away as the explorers took over the camp, which made for a refreshingly simple departure. Best scout on camp was Ben Wall and the Nash Award went to Tabitha Potter.

In October the District scouts were invited by Lady Louisa Portal to a service at Winchester Cathedral to provide a guard of honour for the legal dignitaries. Afterwards there was a Challenge hike organised by district all over the city, down the valley, across St Catherine's Hill and back in to town. Worting team A came first.

The troop attended and supported the village fire work event organised by the church, and on the 5th the scouts were hiking at Cliddesden on the ridge where a view of the fireworks across Basingstoke could be seen and enjoyed. Worting also attended the PL's training camps and the winter camp at Lyons Copse. Remembrance parade was very well attended with 70 or more uniformed members attended and providing the flanking guard to the wreath laying at 11 o'clock.

Bag packing at Sainsbury's was a one day only event and so the packing was supplemented with a choir who sang carols and Christmas songs all day. The money went towards the cost of the new roof. The end of year treat was a trip to 'Gravity Force' in Camberley, where a vast array of trampolines used up the last of the troop's 2015 energy.



## 2016

There was a slightly unusual start to 2016 with a low take up on the activities being organised and for the first time in over twenty years the annual 'lads and dads' was cancelled for lack of support. (This was to have been a hike across the Marlborough Downs to Avebury).

None the less there has been a strong programme and with the new badge structure the evenings and activities have refocused to fit the badge criteria, including working on the challenge elements of international themes and local history. The latter was served very well by the Worting church millennium celebration which the scouts were able to support with a model medieval village and a drawing of Worting as it might have looked a thousand years ago. The troop had a night time hike through Cliddesden, with chips to follow, and a perfectly lovely evening hiking around Malshanger in the first of the summer evenings. We cycled around Greenham Common looking for UXBs, which eventually were found to contain sweets as a reward, and competed in the district cyclorama. Worting was represented in the district incident night hike and there was an evening canoeing on the canal ended with watery larks and hilarious falls.

Although the Avebury walk was cancelled, 5 scouts signed up for the London Cycle Ride which was great fun following in the footsteps of the Olympics year and once again sleeping at the Roland Philips centre. Roland Philip's death in the First World War was described by Baden Powell as the most significant loss to the scouting movement in the whole war. The Lewis Grey twins helped as young leader (poachers turned game keepers!) and it was a small enough group to move fast and have fun.

St George's Day was well attended and the troop was (as usual) smartly turned out. The Duck Race again this year had good weather and in the setting of the Bartons Mill pub, and with 'messaging about in the river' a key part of the day, what could be nicer!

This year the troop attended a District camp at Fernycrofts in the New Forest with all the Groups in the district in attendance and all age groups, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers. It was well organised and well attended. The mix of age groups and leaders worked well, and the communal catering and 'Worting' family atmosphere prevailed on our camp. Cubs and Beavers are definitely light activated, but it took breakfast to get the scouts up. And the smell of bacon attracted many ex Worting Explorers from the Denali camp close by. There was huge amount for the scouts to do and they were pretty much free range for most of the weekend.

The canoe camping weekend was, as ever, a steep learning curve for some, a real challenge for many and a definite for all personal memory banks! Three leaders, eight

scouts and a mountain of kit in dry bags and barrels, and a dog, took to the Wey navigation in Godalming in a mixture of kayaks and canoes. The waterside overnight in lightweight tents with dehydrated foods and lightweight cooking equipment provided a taste of future adventures for the scouts gain independence. It is a testimony to the patience (and experience!) of Worthing parents that they waited cheerfully for the intrepid explorers to emerge from the excitement of the Wey onto the banks of the Thames at Weybridge, weary but proud of their combined achievements.

At the tail end of the summer term was a joint cub scout meeting to assist with the linking up process at Down Grange, with an impromptu water slide rounding the evening off. There was the traditional end of term Colt Hill canoe and barbeque.

Following the end of term was the Family Fun Day enjoyed by the whole Group. It was single day event to replace family Camp as the District Camp had been the mix aged camping event this year. It was very kindly hosted by Worthing House and great fun was had by everyone, with games, a picnic and burgers, and a cake competition.

Summer camp, the highlight of the year, was at Buddens Farm, Wool in Dorset. We set off on Saturday morning, and regrouped at Tyneham deserted village, evacuated in the war and never reoccupied as the site remains a live firing range. The scouts explored the site, an evocative mix of the ruined and the intact, and had their lunch in the shade of a tree by the church, which was very tranquil until the water fight. We then took the beach path down to Worbarrow Bay to cool off at the beach and paddle in the waves. In the afternoon we set up camp, which took all afternoon, especially in the heat, and left us ready for the quiet and cool of evening.

Sunday was the day of the main hike of the week. We parked above Swyre Head and made our way across to the Head passing a memorial bench to aircrews who crashed into the hill. We had a group photograph on the burial mound and then headed off down the steep hill to the coastal path, where we struck east. The day comprised almost exclusively of steep climbs up and unnerving steps down a series of headlands, each taking our breath away in both senses. The hard work was rewarded by glorious views. We had lunch and a paddle at Chapman's Pool, and looked for pebbles and fossils. This particular generation of scouts being quite taken with fossil hunting.

In the afternoon after a particularly steep climb we reached the 12th century St Aldhems chapel. The local coastguard station allowed the scouts to have a look around (the most presentable scout being sent to knock on the door and ask), and the scouts took it in turns to look around the coastguard station and the chapel. The soft damp walls of the chapel were deeply incised with graffiti. It was fascinating to read ancient names and dates; at what point does graffiti change from being vandalism to being fascinating? After quite a hike further we called in to the old Winspit quarry, but some of the scouts

were weary so only about half explored the quarry. Eventually we made our way up to Worth Maltravers to find the minibus and make our way back to camp.

Monday was a quieter day to allow the scouts to recover, and we went to Monkey World. We were joined by Rob, Philippa and Theo (the star of the show as always). The large site quickly absorbed the scouts and we regrouped at lunchtime by the park, in the shade or sunshine according to taste and by the ice cream kiosk. In the early afternoon, after the scouts had visited the gift shop, we made our way back to camp where we had some canoes booked on the lake. The main task was to assist the conservation of the lake by pulling out weed. By the time we had finished there was a large pile, so we felt we had done a good job. But there was also time for fun, canoeing and jumping off the pontoon. The scouts were free to return to the tents as they got cold and so as the evening drew in it was just a few hardy souls left jumping in and then washing down the boats before we returned them.

Tuesday was a bike ride to Lulworth. First stop was the cake shop at Wool where carb and sugar loading took place for the long uphill haul to Lulworth. Split up into ability groups, we reassembled at about lunchtime on Lulworth Cove beach. Plunging into that cold sea water after the long dry cycle ride felt like a red hot poker being quenched. Glorious. Later in the afternoon a small group detached and headed off to look at the fossil forest, but which unfortunately could not be reached as the army were using the range. But they returned to the cove and searched out fossils at the rocky end of the beach, with some success. Then the cycle back, which was a bit easier as there was more downhill. Arrangements were made to pick up some of the weaker cyclist and bus them the last few miles home, but in some groups exhausted scouts elected to press on despite the offer, "... for the glory!" and did the whole round trip.

Wednesday was another day out and about. We drove to Corfe Castle where an hour and a half was allowed for exploring the castle and the medieval re-enactment village. From the castle we walked to the train station for a ride on the steam train to Swanage. As the train was a little delayed the station staff allowed the scouts to go into the signal box and move some of those great signal levers you see on the old films. It was quite extraordinary to realise that it was a physical mechanical link between that lever and a signal somewhere down the line.

At Swanage we blended in with the tourists and the scouts could enjoy the seaside or explore the town as they wanted. Their task was to spend a £4 budget on their lunch meeting key criteria of, some of your five a day, some hot food, some cold and a drink. Each scout (and leader) had to report to Chrissie their menu with receipts, for life lessons and some leg pulling afterwards. At the end of the afternoon we climbed the hill out of Swanage and made our way along the high ridge back towards Corfe. We stopped for a picnic supper high on the downs, and the light was fading fast as we trailed down into Corfe to the minibus and back to camp. The atmosphere and the views watching the

sun going down over Poole Harbour from the high ridge standing on ancient burials mounds was truly memorable.

Thursday was a chance to catch our breath. The scouts were allowed to get up when they were ready and do their own breakfast (although J and Neil became short order cooks just for the fun of it) and then they relaxed around camp. The only taxing activity that day was a bike based treasure hunt around the local area. In the evening we went to Moreton where we visited the delightful church with magnificent engraved windows, which was locked unfortunately; Lawrence of Arabia grave, and then to the ford where we paddled in the ice cold stream. It is apparently the widest ford in Dorset, but it was a treat to paddle, lark about and cool off.

Friday, the last day, came round much too quickly. We went to Bovington tank museum, which is always fascinating, and had lunch as we watched the tracked vehicle display. The gift shop was particularly popular. On the way back to camp a smaller self-selected group of scouts visited Cloud Hill, Lawrence of Arabia's house. It is very small and so we could only go in in groups of three with a 'please don't touch anything' instruction. It was a smashing little house with a very reverential atmosphere which the scouts respected. The tail end of the afternoon was used to do some of the preliminary packing to make Saturday morning easier. In the evening we went to Kimmeridge Bay where we had a BBQ, a walk on the beach, more paddling (but the chill of the evening made this a select few) a stroll up the hill and a general wistful last night relax.

The other evenings had been very pleasantly spent too, a few evening camp fires, some football, water fights (not all leader endorsed), a veritable league table of the 'bead game' and a scout 'X factor' which was entirely spontaneous. Every night the hammocks and cargo net were in use and the gentle murmur of scouts chatting under the stars – a mummer that occasionally rose to a crescendo. The scouts all got on well with each other and it was a very pleasant atmosphere. Saturday morning we packed up and came home and tired scouts and leaders went home.

Best scout on camp was awarded to Alex Forsberg and Callum Findley won the Nash Award for his 'consideration of others'.

Later in the summer there was an expedition challenge from Walbury Hill via Combe Gibbet into the Kennet Valley and beyond for some of the older scouts whose scouting career is rushing towards completion and Chief Scouts gold badges resulted eventually for Hayden Sheppard and Tabitha Potter.

The autumn term had a troop forum, night navigation from Beggarwood to the hut, a night where we were shown wood working by a traditional chair maker who uses only old tools and old ways and the expedition challenge presentation (which looked like they had great fun). Cooking was big theme of the winter term, in preparation for the district

cooking competition. The eliminator was judged by a local chef, who was very impressed. The winning team were joined by the runners up to represent Worthing at the District Cooking Competition securing second and third place. At the weekends there were plenty of activities with a district canoe taster session one Saturday and the Canoe Challenge the following Sunday. There was a day of excavation with the Liss Archaeology Group and a Winter Camp.

The Great London Scout Challenge was a great day of scouting organised by the district. It involve hiking and hunting for clues in London, between Waterloo and Greenwich, and Worthing sent twenty six enthusiasts. J's team took a little time out to comb the foreshore looking for Tudor pottery (with success).

The hut weekend was well attended and lots of fun was had, badge work completed and domestic tasks explored. The craft evening was a mixture of glass engraving, Christmas card making and ceramic decoration. The Christmas party was party games and party food and JJs evening was full of fun and laser hunt games.

The news at end of the year is that there will soon be a Sherborne St John scout troop. The Sherborne St John cubs have traditionally come to Worthing and indeed have provided some of our shining stars. Whilst it is positive that a new troop has been created Worthing will of course miss their Sherborne recruits.



## 2017

At the start to the year Worting lost some promising young scouts to the newly formed Sherborne St John troop, so ending many years of association with Sherborne St John as Worting has been the follow-on troop for the Sherborne Cubs. But this does allow the troop to take a few more scouts who have not come up through cubs, so that is a silver lining.

The year's programme was full as usual. The meetings at the hut in the spring included the World Challenge badge, which is quite complicated, and there was also an evening on public speaking skills (and the presentations the scouts worked up were all on international charities so reinforcing their World Challenge work). Local history is also a theme that was explored (the scouts went looking for and found the grave of Harris Bigg-Wither, likely to be a celebrity in the Jane Austen 200 year, as he was the local man who was engaged to her for 12 hours). There were also navigation evenings at the hut followed by practical navigation out and about, in preparation for the District Night Hike competition. And of course spring term brought the traditional pancake night which is always a feast and an eye opener to see the culinary eccentricities the scouts bring with them and apply to their pancake. Thursday evenings were also out and about at Marnel Park doing games and adventures, swimming at Cranbourne School, a night of ball games at Kempshott and a night hike with chips.

The spring term's hut weekend was the usual mix of practical badge work and fun, including games, crafts, first aid, pioneering, maintenance, mokie night and cooking as well as discussion about the importance of sleep, balanced diet and exercise and the harmful effects of smoking, drugs & alcohol.

This year Worting troop have adopted the heritage Orchard at Kempshott which is looked after by the Kempshott Conservation Group who were very happy to receive the offer of practical help through the year and, by return, offered a bug hunting day and a share of the orchard's produce. The orchard now gives a good opportunity to work towards both conservation and community aspects of the World Challenge badge and the Kempshott Conservation Group have been very happy with the amount of work done on each occasion. Some scouts again joined the Liss Archaeology Group in their excavation at the Roman villa, in the spring and in the autumn.

Two Worting teams took part on the night of the District night hike, organised by Overton troop. But at the start of the evening the heavens opened and so all the teams looked half drowned by the time they reached J and Neil who were running a base. But they had fun, with the two Worting teams coming a creditable third and fourth out of seven teams.

In the spring we went to see the restoration of the roof of the Vyne, a once in a lifetime opportunity to see a Tudor roof stripped back to its bare rafters. The troop bought a tile

and all who attended signed it. That tile and the names on it will be in the roof at the Vyne for hundreds of years to come. There was also time for a treasure hunt in the woods and a visit to the bird hide.

There was an expedition challenge for those oldest scouts aspiring to their Chief Scout's Gold Award, Jonny, Spencer, Adam & Alicia, and a presentation award at the Mayor's parlour for those who had recently received their awards, Tabitha Potter and Haydn Sheppard. There has been caving and canoeing and a handful of scouts also attended a very good PLs training weekend run by Overton, with some Worthing leaders helping.

Gav and Chrissie organised the District Cyclorama again, this time around the Kempshott/ Hatch Warren/Oakley/Ibworth area, with the Scout trophy won by Overton and Worthing providing the second Scout team. The Bourns family were second overall, the junior Clarks third, the Butlers fourth and the Hollingsheads fifth, emphasising the potential for this to be a fun training event for accompanied youngsters not yet ready to go it alone in a Scout team. Matt Perman accompanied Oceiah on the tandem so it was good to see such an inclusive event. The Worthing Duck Race at Bartons Mill was again blessed by fine weather and it was a delightful day in the pub garden by the river, which also helped to raise funds for the Group.

In the early summer a small but hardy group of scouts cycled from Bath to Bristol along the old railway line. The weather was good and the inclines usually moderated by the old track bed, and some delightful scenery was passed. There was an overnight stay at a scout hut right on Bristol waterside who had seen dragon boat racing during the day and was a hive of fun and chaos as we arrived, but we were given a very nice welcome and made at home. It was a lovely spot to stay and we strolled into town in the evening to see the bright lights and night life of Bristol. On the Sunday the scouts cycled to the Severn Bridge, with a slight detour due to a closed marathon course, and then across the bridge to Wales and back. A huge achievement for some very tired scouts (and leaders).

Family camp was, as usual, in great spirits. The weather was good, the activities were fun as usual, with archery, climbing, canoeing, rockets and games. The archery was run by a trio from the County Archery Team who made it really fun, and the river Wey was as usual cool and refreshing for the canoeists who fell in or were otherwise drenched, which seemed to be most of them. It was with sadness that at the end we had to say good bye to the stalwart Lewis Grey (LG life's good) family, who have moved north, and who have supported the troop whilst and beyond Aaron and Joel being with us. At family camp they were long time chief cook and caterer, and rocket launcher. But it was also with great pride we applauded as Susanne Perman received her Queen's Scout Award, well deserved, and Chrissie received her Award for Merit for all her years of great service to scouting, also very well deserved.

When the weather was still fine there was a survival weekend at Middle Copse, building shelters, cooking over an open fire, eating in the fresh air, learning fire and knife skills and playing wide games. As usual great fun. The parent and offspring expedition was a weekend canoe camp on the Thames and Kennet. Day one was down the Thames from Pangbourne to Caversham with half the team paddling and half walking, with swapping over as we went. There were some rather brisk showers in the morning, but it cleared up as the day went on. At one point the Thames path crosses the river by thin air and then back again also by thin air a few hundred metres later, and so the Canadian canoes were used to ferry the walkers the inconvenient gap. Nobody fell in! At Reading we spent the night in the river side scout HQ, which was delightful, with quite a few taking the opportunity to sleep on the balcony with fresh air, sunset and wildlife. However through the night and into the early morning, periodic noisy brightly lit party boats went by. I raised a smile when an afternoon party boat of girls were shouting for someone amongst us to do the Dab, I being a most unlikely person to know what 'the dab' was. We also had a lovely evening walk along the Caversham bank. Day two was paddling down the Thames to the Kennet, stopping for an ice cream. We proceeded up the canal and paddled through a very busy, sunny and cheerful Reading town centre, to waves and smiles from the shopping public and the offer of pizza from one restaurant. We also passed a fireman rescue practice event at a weir on the edge of town. We paddled all day - up the canal to Theale where cars and trailer were waiting to whisk everyone back to Basingstoke. A glorious weekend.

The term continued with canoeing, a cycling navigation exercise around Basingstoke with an indulgent stop at a remote play park, a joint evening at Down Grange with the cubs to help them to integrate (games and a water slide) and the scout term ended with barbeque canoeing at Colt Hill, the Wharf at Odiham. As it was a pleasant evening all of the scouts got much wetter than was strictly necessary, but had huge fun doing so.

The 2017 Summer Camp was at the Kernow Jamborette on the Pencarrow Estate, just outside Bodmin, which Worting attended 4 years ago in 2013. In addition to the scouts and leaders on site Worting young leaders supplied 5 members of site staff, who helped the whole event succeed but also kept a weather eye on Worting. The pleasure of a Jamborette is the new friends and contacts you make from being on site with thousands of other scouts and leaders.

We set off very early on Saturday morning for the long haul down to Cornwall and regrouped at the site in the early afternoon. The weather had been wet and the ground was already showing signs of stress from vehicles on site, but small mechanical mules driven by the staff were available to take kit to the sites. Worting's site was an 'additional' one created out of part of the originally planned open space which meant we were 'land locked' and for the first few hours we had to negotiate a way through

other peoples' camps to get in and out until the staff and Stu had some formal paths created.

Sunday was set aside for activities to meet others on camp, but particularly within our sub camp, called Amazon. An impressive gate was built and decorated with inflatable Amazonian animals and green leaves. There was a welcome quiz that involved talking to people, looking for a list of professions, birthdays etc. All the troops seemed to have additional ideas for making contact and we had visitors from other troops all day. Worting cooked camp doughnuts and no scout could have one unless they brought a new friend from another troop, so a small team were kept busy catering for what seemed to be the whole sub camp. But we made new friends who came for the camp doughnuts but came back for the fun. Alicia and Lauren in particular seemed to attract new friends. In the evening there was a live band on the main stage.

On Monday Amazon was entertained by the mud zone. Divided into mixed teams to split up troops, some spent the morning in the water and inflatable zone whilst others went to the woods to learn how to cook pizza in the wildland, have a ride in a four wheel drive around a course, with a swap over during the day. The pizza cooking included fire starting and mixing dough in a plastic bag, which was particularly fun. In the evening there was a disco. In order to encourage the scouts to join in J offered that whoever stayed on camp would be treated to an impromptu talk entitled History of Hampshire County Council 1907 to 1931. His bluff was called when he finished washing up to find half a dozen smirking scouts arranged in lecture format asking for their talk. After a brief foray into J's fictional recollections they hot-footed it to the disco, their point having been made.

Tuesday was the splash zone. This required a very early start to load into buses to the coast, where the day was spent learning surfing, body boarding and playing various beach games. It was a long, tiring but great fun day on the spectacular Cornish coast.

Wednesday was the adventure zone where small groups were taken around a range of on-site activities all day, including shooting, climbing, zip wire, quad bikes (at slow speed), mountain bikes, laser tag and tunnels. In the evening was the carnival. Limitations on space for those of us who had long-hauled to the site meant we were less flamboyant in our appearance than others but overall it was a spectacle.

Thursday was Kernopoly, a navigation by public transport around Cornwall, visiting places and scoring points, and photos of Worting scouts in unlikely locations all across the area prove how wide ranging the teams were. Gav, Stu and Liam led teams far and wide over Cornwall - St Ives, Truro, Redruth and St Austell. That night was the talent show and then a choice of watching a film or going to the campfire. The camp fire was very well organised and very enjoyable and topped off by a fire juggling display. It was

also the night that Gav and some of the older scouts went off for some wild camping in the woods.

Friday was creative day, with craft work and filming, circus skills, first aid and international issues. But by this time we were all flagging a bit. In the evening was the closing ceremony with a film of activity on site, some of which was from a drone that had buzzed overhead through the week collecting footage. And sooner than seemed possible for such a packed week it was Saturday, we packed up and headed home.

It was a very wet and muddy week and the site teams did well to keep the camp functioning. At one point the honey waggon servicing the loos needed to be towed by a tractor in turn being towed by a forwarder. The toilets and their vicinity did get very muddy, but it lacked the seas of litter one sees on pictures of festivals by music-loving grown-ups. Everyone did very well in the circumstances. There were only 8 showers on site, so our boiler was kept going so that stand up washes could be had when the shower queue was too daunting. But the showers when you did get one were nice and hot. One side effect of the wet weather was that the scouts spent more time together in the mess tent in the evening making it one of the most sociable camps.

This sociability was enhanced by all the visitors we had. The Worthing site staff (Greg, Matt, the Life's Good twins and Harry H) popped in for coffee on a regular basis and always used the excuse when called up on the walkie talkie that they were helping us sort out a problem (the problem being they had not finished their coffee) but their managers must have thought we were a particularly hopeless troop at looking after ourselves. Most days we had a visit from Nora and Alouise, two Irish scouts who were a noisy delight. Chloe from Bristol was also pretty much adopted by Lauren and Alicia. A small group of very young Girl Guides next door often popped in to join in the chatter, cards, games, jokes and tricks and to be rude to the boys. And there was Ryan a Somerset scout with Irish origins and accent to match, with the gift of the gab who particularly liked to keep Chrissie informed of all things and who adopted us for the campfire.

It was a hard, wet, muddy and yet remarkably short week. But it was also great fun, and sociable. The food and the hot chocolate were great, and chasing the scouts off to bed much later than advertised was a natural consequence of the fun they were having on camp, either at the main stage with their new friends or with old friends in the mess tent. The best Scout at Camp trophy went to James Lyness and the Nash Award, for the person who had been most considerate of others, to Alex Forsberg.

The autumn term saw quite a number of cubs transfer up and some big characters move on and the troop acquired a younger age profile. At the hut there was a strong cooking theme as is usual, with Ready Steady Cook, the District Competition eliminator and of course the District Competition itself at which we were represented by two teams, one

of which won! Congratulations to Oceiah, Katie, Oliver S and Lilly Ella who worked really hard to that end. Our other team came a respectable third.

J led two evenings on international issues and international charity work, and there was a practical output with a car boot sale for Shelterbox organised by Alicia and Johnny. There was creative evening and a Christmas Party. Out and about there was a night hike at Hannington during which Tim tried to fit all those present into a single kissing gate. There was a navigation evening at the Lime Pits, a navigation evening and a fun treat at JJs. The Hut Weekend was not as strongly supported as in the past but covered a lot of badge work, as well as creative, pioneering and cooking; and the after dinner forums covered a number of international themes towards the quite difficult World Challenge Badge.

Beyond the main programme there was an opportunity to spend a day at an archaeological excavation with the Liss archaeology Group and a day at the Orchard doing conservation work and a day doing a bio blitz. This involved chasing down the insects with large nets and then identifying them. It was a fascinating day for the scouts, but the conservation group were equally pleased as they are able to start recording what is on the site. Canoeing was as always a big theme and the Basingstoke Canal Canoe Challenge was well supported with Stu, James Lyness, Jonny Bishop and Sam Bourns winning gold medals and Isabelle Lyness a bronze. Oceiah was recognised for raising the most sponsorship money for Accessible Boating and is looking forward to her reward trip on Dawn or Madame Butterfly. There was a County Survival Camp attended by a hardy five-some, a great County Winter Camp enjoyed by a further six, and a County PL training camp that two scouts attended. Only one scout team and one Explorer team rose to the challenge of the District Portsmouth Treasure Hunt. It was a fantastic day out which many more scouts could have and should have enjoyed. The trail led us from the historic dockyard through the old town along the Southsea defences, the Round Tower, D-Day museum, Southsea Castle and back again, with J top loading the local information with tales of history and the navy. The scout team then waited for the leader, parent & beaver combo perched on benches outside the Cadbury outlet shop, weighed down by their purchases. The Worting combo team won, a cause of great celebration by the under-age littlies but with credit for brain input claimed by the oldies! Remembrance Sunday was an important date as well and a large and well turned out Worting contingent were there as always.

Bag packing/carol singing, the Christmas treat at JJs and a Christmas party brought 2017 to a festive close. The year has seen six Chief Scout's Gold Awards - Harry Richards, James Lyness, Alex Forsberg, Callum Findlay, Oceiah Annesley Suter and Ben Wall - the measure of a hard working troop and hard-working youngsters determined to do what is right in furthering their place in the community. Well done all – another good year for Worting.





## 2018

The first term of the year was as always filled with activities including map reading, hikes, games, swimming, problem solving indoor and out, and pancakes, but beyond this were other opportunities. A taster course on diving was organised, there was an opportunity to go caving, and a day with at the Kempshott Orchard doing conservation, and a Worting team made a good effort on the District night hike from Whitchurch to Overton, which was notable for the snowy and frosty weather that was endured, There was a hut weekend part way through the term which was well attended and covered a range of craft and practical issues, as well as camaraderie, cooking and games.

St George's Day Parade was held at Aldworth school, but was a little weak as an event leaving little to look back to. Overton again organised a PL Training Course which was attended by a number of Worting scouts, and was notable for th small and friendly nature of the course. Unfortunately Tom bumped his head on a locker edge and had to be taken away and checked over so no doubt the course was memorable for him.

The summer term was equally fun packed, with more emphasis on outdoor with the good weather, including hiking, orienteering and cycling. Caving and a canoeing course were additionally available,. The troop had a go at running a sausage sizzle at Bunnings, and we all had 'grill envy' at their marvellous cooking equipment, and some money was raised for the troop in the process. The troop also took part in the district orienteering event which was held in the lovely woods at Alice Holt. The team was very young and so were allowed a leader to keep them from wandering too far off course, but did well in consideration of that.

In May was the parent and scout weekend trip which was a revisiting of an old classic, Hampton Court to home – by bike. It is the event where parents discover exactly what being part of the Worting Family really means. Everybody mucks in, and indeed there was a modicum of muck due to some splashy weather and apparently unavoidable mud baths. A great experience, cycling along the Thames Path, discovering the Wey navigation, marvelling at the spectacular graffiti under the M25 and then joining the Basingstoke Canal towpath at its very beginning. Tongues, muscles and will power were all exercised en route to the overnight stop at Frimley Green Scout HQ, where the combined team produced an amazing evening meal with roast beef and roast chicken options plus all the trimmings (nine vegetables!). The second day was inevitably more challenging with bikes and bodies both now suffering the effects of day one and of the unavoidable hills between the canal and Basingstoke itself. Huge ice creams by the boating lake in Eastrop Park saved the day and enabled the final mighty surge to the finish at Bowlplex. Fifty miles and a remarkable achievement by both the youngsters and the not-so-young, all of whom, for various reasons (some painful but all proud), will remember being part of a Worting Parent and Offspring achievement.

The Great Worting Duck Race at Bartons Mill was yet again blessed by good weather which meant that everyone was able to enjoy the event, the sunshine, some paddling in the river and a delicious meal from the pub if they chose (and many did choose).

In June as the weather improved a major canoeing trip was planned from Eton to Runnymede, to be embellished by history stories from J. Alarmingly J fell ill almost at the same moment that the boasts were launched. Happily Nicky Young stepped in to paddle in his place and intrepid canine Reuben enthusiastically joined her. But less happily as the day went on more fell ill, and on return to Basingstoke we found that others in the troop had also fallen ill that weekend. No need to describe the symptoms, but it went through the scouts, leaders and parents and was probably picked up at the hut meeting the previous Thursday. That evening had been about international clean water and so provided its own object lesson on hand washing and hygiene. Wild camping the following weekend was cancelled as a precaution, which was a shame as it is one of the more popular local camping evenest with the scouts.

Family Camp in July was hot, some might say too hot, although the cooling effect of the river Wey was available during the canoe sessions. Climbing, abseiling and archery were all available, and the Sunday it's a knockout was on a Disney theme. It was well attended, great fun and great food, but we all missed a cohort of young leaders who were away on a stag weekend for Joe Dibley's wedding, Joe a scout of some note from a few years back. How time flies.

The following week was the last meeting of the summer term with the traditional canoeing and mucking about on the canal with J and Chrissie producing a seemingly endless supply of sausage in a bun.

Summer Camp of 2018 will have a special place in everybody's memory, but not always for the right reason. The visitation of a vomiting bug.

We travelled down to Torbay and set up camp at the Watcombe scout camp site under the watchful eye of a Dutch couple who have been the summer wardens at the camp for the last 15 years. Their dog Ronson was a big hit immediately and throughout the week. The site looked out to sea with a wonderful view. Our first crisis struck when it was discovered that one of the dormitory tents was a pole short, despite having been signed back into the QM as complete after its last outing. Temporary arrangements over came the problem and we had supper in the ever reliable and all embracing mess tent, the social hub of the camp. This was followed by a gentle stroll down the valley to the nearest beach, where some brave souls bathed, and then a hard slog back up the hill.

There is nothing cosier than rain and wind outside when you are snug in your tent, but our second crisis was to wake up to find one of the shelters had thrashed itself to pieces in the high wind. Fortunately it turned out that the cover wasn't torn but one of the

metal poles was bent, consigning the shelter to the repairs bay. Sunday morning the scouts explored a small man made cave system on site made of pipes and then we got out the grass sleds. The camp site was on a pretty steep slope and so reasonable speed could be achieved, but the lean of the slope tended to deposit the riders in the left hand hedge. In the afternoon the young leaders supervised a navigation exercise from the camp to the next beach where some sea bathing and frolicking occupied a few hours. The GSL and J, left unsupervised, navigated via an ice cream shop and a funicular railway down to the beach. Was this cheating? They said no, 'adapt and overcome'.

On Monday morning we went up to Dartmoor and divided up into small groups on a navigation exercise that took us to the peaks of six tors, using maps, compasses and compass bearings. The weather was splendid and the views from the tors was spectacular. It was the best of days, but very tiring and so a small lie-in was authorised for Tuesday morning.

In the morning Jack organised an on-site mini Olympics. The teams selected their national identity and pitted against each other in a series of adapted Olympic events. Dingy sailing was achieved in wheel barrows; rowing was with a pioneering pole between the legs, running backwards except for the cox; javelin with the Kub set; the hammer throw looked remarkably like welly wanging; long jump, relay (with potatoes); and the 100 yard dash. Each team could select a leader to represent them on a final dash and Adam showed a fine sense of humour by selecting J, who lumbered up the track like a wounded bull rhino and inevitably came last (but it was closer than anyone expected). That evening we went to Paignton and were looked after by a local sea scout group, taking powered and rowed boats out into the bay until the loss of light and tide forced us in.

On Wednesday we had lunch in the park at Goodrington so that we were on hand to enjoy the afternoon at Quay West Splashdown. The drops, slides, tubes and splash pools were great fun for both the young and the young at heart, and the scouts and young leaders had hours of fun. Some older leaders were very happy to recover with a hot chocolate in the sun somewhat sooner than the young ones.

Thursday was to be our most memorable day, but we did not know this when we set off in the morning in small groups with a day rider ticket, to ride the bus system to pose for a selfie at far flung destinations. Although broken up into teams we all seemed to be in Brixham at about lunchtime where one team decided to head home early, one of the scout feeling a little nauseous. Subsequently being sick on the bus and they found themselves off the bus back at Goodrington and asking Chrissie to come and get them in the car. By the time she arrived more reports were coming in of scouts and leaders being sick. One team resorted to a taxi ride to get them home to camp quickly. That evening and over night more scouts and leaders fell ill and the healthy looked after the sick. By the morning the bug had blown through leaving the troop feeling very sorry for

ourselves, either through being ill, or up in the night tending to the poorly. Canoeing in the bay at Paignton was delayed as long as was decent and then as many as wanted could elect to lounge in the sun on the beach and just recover. As the sun revived the weary they found the energy to seek out ice cream, candy floss and arcades on the pier. Friday night should have been a barbeque on the beach, as an end of camp tradition, but in the circumstances we were happy to have supper at the mess tent and get an early night.

Saturday was gratefully welcomed as pack up and go home day. Although all were recovered from their sickness and we had had some good times, we were all glad to put the scene of so much discomfort behind us.

Best scout on Camp was Grace, an excellent achievement on her first camp, and the Nash Award went to Greg whose medical skills and care had been cheerfully and unstintingly given to all who needed him throughout the week and throughout the crisis.

No sooner was the camp kit cleaned and stored away than the tents, wellies and chairs salvaged from Reading Festival 'decorated' the Scout Hut and garden. The intense 'cleansing' ritual went on for days but in the end we had expanded our selection of camping kit and raised significant funds for both Shelter Box and the worldwide contingent at the 2019 USA Scout Jamboree.

The winter term saw the nights draw in and the weather turn cold. In addition to the Thursday meetings, Gav took a batch of older scouts linking up to Explorers on a canal boat weekend. Gav and Chrissie took a group of scouts to the county Winter camp at Lyons Copse as well as another group on their expedition challenge in Purbeck. I took some scouts (and enthusiastic parents) to an archaeology day with the Liss Archaeology Group, to whom we are grateful. There was another chance to work at the Kempshott Orchard on a very cold day, but as usual a gratifying amount of progress was made.

The District Cyclorama provided a mixture of navigating and observational challenges around the greater part of Greenham Common, seeking the answers to questions and orienteering markers en route. The young team of Harrison Young, Oliver Hunt and Grace Insley were well rewarded for heeding a year-full of 'basic lessons in Scouting' by bringing the trophy back to Worting.

The evenings were indoor and out, but more indoor and included cooking in preparation for the district competition and creative, a chance to make presents and cards as the festive season approached. The troop was represented by two teams at the cooking competition, and although we did not win, the report back was that both teams did very well.

There was winter term hut weekend, which was cold inside the hut and out, but lots of activity, craft, DIY Pioneering and games kept everyone warm.

Remembrance parade was very important this year and as usual well attended and smartly turned out. As with 2014 Ben Walls read brief biography for each name as it was read out and it was interesting to see what those 4 years had done for his height, his voice and his confidence.

As the end of the year approached, we had fund raising by bag packing at Sainsburys (as every year a big thank you to Sainsburys and their customers), and this was rewarded by an evening treat at Four Kingdoms, where play equipment and laser quests were available all evening.

The last meeting of 2018 was the scouts Xmas party at the hut, games and a feast. The feast was somewhat biased to the sweet and away from the savoury so next year we must make it our ambition for a more balanced repast.

Four Scouts gained the prestigious Chief Scouts Gold Award in 2018– Alicia Quinby, Jason Crisford, Spencer Nicholson and Jonny Bishop.

Much was achieved in 2018, but it was also a difficult year on many fronts, not least the two episodes of illness. As the year progressed we lost many of the older scouts and by the close of the year we have a very young troop. But hopefully fresh for the challenges of 2019.



## 2019

The spring term was the usual mix of outdoor changes and hut based games, wisdom and badgework, and of course pancakes on the Thursday closest to Shrove Tuesday, but which was a bit bland towards the end of the evening when one twit drank all the lemon juice as a dare. Stuart led an evening of challenge based stations spread around Crabtree Plantation to test the scouts' initiative, the most popular of which was making hot chocolate, not least because it was a crisp and frosty night.

There were two night hikes, one around Malshanger and another around Overton, and one evening was fun and games in War Memorial Park. Unfortunately an evening of swimming was cancelled as the pool was closed at short notice.

The District Night Hike competition, organised by the Overton leaders, was 'blessed' by heavy rain making it a damp affair but providing our team with a solid initiation as to how to cope with challenges in adverse conditions. J and Neil ran a base of 'Kim's game' memorising jewellery 'stolen in a county house robbery'. One enterprising scout whipped out his smart phone to photograph them. He got a point for initiative and a clarification of the rules.

There was a hut weekend in February where the crafts included candle making alongside the usual activities. There was also a Saturday in March where a select number of scouts volunteered at the Kempshott Orchard.

For much of March the stalwarts, Gav and Chrissie, were away on the trip of a lifetime to New Zealand and were greatly missed – organisation is always much tighter when they are around.

After an Easter break the summer term was upon us, and pretty much immediately St George's Day parade, a march through town. Gav as always was the Parade Marshall, but this year J was on the saluting platform having been selected as the MP's escort. The next day was cyclorama a district competition organised by Worting, a navigation and clue driven exploration of Basingstoke against the clock. Out of the fifteen teams who entered there were no teams made up solely of Worting scouts but we did field three family teams who thoroughly enjoyed the event, with Tim and Albert winning overall.

Swimming was cancelled as again the pool was closed at short notice – 2019 was not a lucky year for swimming. There were many Thursday evening adventures in the summer term, when the outdoors is warm and light. These included challenges and wide games at Crabtree Plantation and on Beggarwood – where amongst other things the scouts had to make up and recite a rap and create an image of a witch out of found materials. There was also canoeing on the canal at the Barley Mow. In addition Gav ran the Paddlepower Course and there was an opportunity to go caving in the Mendips so plenty to do.

In May we had the great adventure of returning to Brownsea Island, the birth place of scouting, staying at the South Lodge, and exploring the island and the shore. Seeing red squirrels and almost tame peacocks was a treat, and the scout found a truly giant (but dead) jelly fish on the shore. It was a great weekend of camaraderie and fun, and such a charming place to wake up and have breakfast in such a beautiful place right alongside the shore.

The Duck Race at Bartons Mill was a lovely day; the excitement of the race, the food and ambience of a gorgeous pub, and some paddling and duck rescue in the water by the scouts. The day was made all the more fun with the games and treats organised by Ben Mills and his team.

Parent and Offspring was a chance to bring a parent and hike across the wonderful countryside around Marlborough and Avebury, led by J who is an archaeologist. Only a few families turned out but they had a great weekend. They walked along the Ridgeway and found some small prehistoric stone tools; they explored the valley of the stones and stayed overnight in an excellent scout hut in Marlborough. The next day J showed them around Silbury Hill, Europe's largest prehistoric mound and the Neolithic henge at Avebury, before hiking up Windmill Hill, another Neolithic site. All went home tired but happy.

Family camp was well attended and as always greatly enjoyed, with excellent scout activities on Saturday, enjoyed by scouts, cubs, beavers, mums, dads and siblings. There was a 'Jeu sans frontier' on Sunday with fun, games and challenges for all the family. There was also a joint meeting with the cubs at the Lime Pits, an evening of games where the cubs and scouts could mingle. This was topped off by the very popular 'slip and slide', where thick PVC sheeting is wetted down to allow slippery kids to zoom down the amphitheatre side. End of term was the traditional canoeing and sausage sizzle at Colt Hill, where canoeing and gratuitously getting wet was sustained by a seemingly endless supply of sausage in a bun. Many thanks to Ryan for the cooking, a natural BBQ chef.

Summer Camp was at Miskin Scout Summer Camp

Twenty excited Scouts and plenty of leaders and young leaders headed off to South Wales, to the excellent scout camp site at Miskin; noted for its wide open spaces for wide games, its charming river flowing through and the noisy trains. As usual the first day, after travel, is taken up by setting up the camp, tents, mess tents, hammocks if you have them and cargo net for the ever popular but incredibly uncomfortable looking 'sleeping out with your particular chums'.

Dinner time – our first camp kitchen meal, had been pre-prepared and imported from a home freezer – we can't be doing with messing about with meal preparation alongside

the demands of setting up camp. After supper there was time to explore. Across the river bridge was a small sloped wood, ideal for wide games and fuel gathering, but it was the river itself which is the main attraction – authorised paddling areas when under adult observation are established and thoroughly investigated.

On Sunday we set off for the Brecon Beacons. The main troop made the steep climb up to western ridge and then along more gently to the base of the peaks to be climbed, much snacking on the way. The 'support duo' who had a note from matron that they didn't need to climb, followed the gentler easterly approach and kept their binoculars trained on the swarm of burgundy shirts on the skyline. The sun was shining but the breeze was cooling. Four summits were available. All achieved Corn Ddu and the highest, Pen-y-Fan, and descended to meet the support duo at the base of number three, Cribyn. The wait at the Pen- y-fan/Cribyn saddle was marked by meeting a smashing group of scouts from Maidenhead and inevitably Greg knew one of their leaders from his work. A remarkable number accepted the challenge to continue the hard-core route up and over Cribyn and then eleven also went up Fan-y-Big. Chicken fajitas for tea rounded the day off.

Monday was a day on site, cooking over open fires and building a rope bridge over the river. Some scouts had brought hammocks but there was an opportunity to make their own using para-cord, a complex process of cutting and then knotting. Use of the bow saw and fire starting is demonstrated by leaders, particularly Will, for the cooking fires. Over by the river we joined forces with a Scout Troop from Southampton, and jointly developed a sophisticated monkey bridge design to span the river, using lots of rope and lots of poles lashed together. A 'back to basics scouting' day – fire building, backwoods cooking, pioneering, knotting – which will hopefully prove to be valuable skills into their adult years. One triumph of the day were the steamed puds under Chrissie's supervision, the results declared nothing short of incredible – lush lemon-and vanilla pud, a vast jammy topped citrus pud and a syrupy ginger creation. In the afternoon, under J's watchful eye, many of the scouts enjoyed the cool shade and pleasant chill of paddling in the wide but shallow, rocky river, creating an engineering masterpiece of a rock dam.

Tuesday started with a supermarket sweep with scouts trying to make £4 purchase food for the day, including all the major food groups and their 'five-a-day'. An initial buzz of interest around the Pick & Mix was dispersed and some herding towards the fruit and veg aisle was necessary. However one senior leadership duo were disqualified when a witty lady on the till announced in Chrissie's hearing that they had spent £15.50 - but being disqualified did have its advantages, not least avoiding having the receipt scrutinised by Chrissie! As it was raining the planned programme was changed and we headed to the Big Pit coal mining museum – a fantastic re-enlivened coal mine in the Welsh Valleys – where a tour underground also acted as shelter from the rain.

On Wednesday, with the sun shining we went to Cardiff, circumnavigating the city and parking at the western end of the incredible barrage that has enabled Cardiff Bay to retain the freshwaters of the Rivers Taff and Ely, with the water level regulated by giant sluices and access to the sea controlled by huge sea locks – an engineering masterpiece which the scouts were able to marvel at. We strolled along the length of the barrage, spending time in a play park but not at the £20 a head Aqua Park – which did look like fun. By the Welsh Assembly, the Roald Dahl Plaza had been transformed into a seaside beach and fair for the holidays. The scouts were given the freedom of the plaza so long as they kept in groups of between 3 and 5 in number. The leaders, ostensibly relaxing but in reality alert, didn't detect any trouble, unless you count the squeals of the girls on the spinning teacups or the enthusiasm of the boys for acquiring prize plastic guns at the shooting gallery. In the afternoon the troop invaded the International Pool at Cardiff with enthusiasm, where slides, squirters, rapids, waterspouts, fountains and bubble pools entertained them for over two hours. Back at the camp, Greg set to work on curry night – some younger scouts who had not experienced a Greg curry night before, flinched at the thought of this unfamiliar territory, but whether it was Greg's excellent cooking, the universal appeal of curry, or just hunger after such an active day, it was polished off by all.

Thursday was the much anticipated waterfall walk, one of those iconic adventures that will linger as a highlight in the memory for all on the camp. At various places opportunity was taken to jump, plunge or wade into the cool mountain water of the deepest pools. This was proper scouting – having a go, meeting personal challenges, making the most of life's opportunities. Andy Butler managed to lose his precious 'gift from my wife' watch off his wrist, but with repeated duck diving in ice cold deep dark water it was miraculously retrieved.

Between the head of the two river systems we discover a small, but thankfully forewarned, ice cream shoppe! The whole party lounged with their ices in the shops charming garden and, for no discernible reason, cheered and greeted a bemused but friendly passing tractor driver. Revived, we headed down into the next valley for more waterfalls, swimming and photo opportunities. We had to walk behind one large fall in order to get to the other side and then just had to stop to play in the deep cold pool to the front. This one was more of a tourist hot spot, so we were watched by basking families and joined by a few, a very few, equally intrepid swimmers - the gathering audience of walkers no doubt impressed at the sight of so many young people having 'such larks'. As we dried and dressed Greg, our paramedic, tended the forehead wound of a little girl who came a cropper on the rocks, much to the relief of her Mum. "It's OK, this is my day job" - it's surprising the talents that you'll find within a passing Scout Troop. The long tiring climb down the river valley was revived by a distribution of sugary sweets by Chrissie. Definitely a day, if not The Day, to remember.

Friday, the last day. The scouts had been promised a treat. Good. A visit to the Welsh Living History Museum was definitely a treat for J and the scouts did enjoy the first couple of hours they spent in peer groups, wandering around the old buildings that had been reconstructed on the site – tannery, shops, watermill, farm, miner's cottages, church, school and a somewhat out of period character (but oh so welcome) ice cream outlet. But after lunch was time for a go on the high ropes course. That was the promised treat. 15ft up into the trees walking/hauling/swinging yourself around the perilous course (attached to a safety rope of course), with a descent by zip line at the other end. The day not finished, we headed off to a coastal country park. The tide was out, so there are rock pools to investigate and our resident archaeologist tells us that Jurassic and Triassic artefacts are to be found, as well as crystalline deposits within the pebbles. For tea the scouts self-selected into teams with barbecues, burgers, cheese slices, buns and lamb kofta, with a central selection of salads for back up and, of course, cake. The day is rounded off nicely on the adjacent parkland with a giant frisbee match led by Charlie Haslam who now plays at national level for Bristol University men's team.

And so to the final gathering at camp around the meeting table with candles glowing, going round with each scout saying what they had enjoyed most and of what they were each most proud? As Chrissie would paraphrase, it sounded like "I have loved being part of this very special family, experiencing the fun, the shared support, the adventures, the personal and collective responsibility and the enhanced personal awareness that is scouting."

Winter Term sees the evenings getting darker and colder again. Over the summer Colin King, Sally & Gordon Hossick, Tim & Anna Strawbridge, Gav and Chrissie had once again collected camping kit from the Reading Festival – to use and to sell to raise funds for us and for ShelterBox. The scouts took a turn at cleaning, repairing, packing and selling and the result meant we were able to purchase another Shelter Box, our fifth, as well as giving the Camrose Centre items for local homeless people.

The early, lighter evenings found us orienteering with Tim at Greenham Common. The cluster of cars, parents and young people piqued the interest of the security guards who paid us a visit and stayed for a chat about their scouting days. There was also an evening at Cowdery Down tackling puzzles that Stuart had set. A laugh was raised when, in the twilight gloom, a roosting bird startled by a torch dropped a load of fright (rhyming slang) on to the head of an initially puzzled, then alarmed and then disgusted scout.

Winter term always has a strong cooking theme, a valuable skill all scouts do well to learn. First we had a 'ready steady cook' evening, challenged to produce a meal from random ingredients – not so much random as helpfully reduced in price by Morrison's the night before. Later, teams competed in a knock-out heat in order to represent the troop at the District Cooking competition. Some excellent meals were produced, indeed most were excellent and all were a credit, but the guest judge, Helen, whittled them

down to a winner. The young team of Holly, Django, Claire and Ethan entered as The Fortune Cookies, produced an amazing meal and brought the trophy back to Worting.

One evening at the hut Tom Forsberg and Lauren Hollingshead gave their Chief Scouts Gold presentation and, a few weeks later, were presented with their Gold Awards, Adam Jennings having received his coveted award earlier in the year.

The autumn hut weekend was a mix of games, craft, DIY skills and cooking, but we also hiked across to the Orchard to have a go at making apple juice from the orchard apples. A few weeks later we had another Saturday at the orchard helping with conservation. This day was memorable as another volunteer, not a scout thank heavens, got a cut deep enough to warrant an ambulance being called; the scout leaders, particular Jack, having a thankfully rare opportunity to put their much practiced first aid skills to use.

The District Challenge day was excellent, organised by the Hatch Warren leaders, in Oxford. The teams followed a variety of navigation styles around a route collecting clues and enduring an increasingly biblical downpour of rain. We were all glad to retreat to the warmth of a train carriage to carry us back to Basingstoke. The very next day was Remembrance Parade, well attended and blessed by much better weather.

Winter term we also had a joint meeting with the cubs in Middle Copse with fireworks and sausages.

Bag packing went ahead without the back bone of Gav and Chrissie, but Dave Wheeler the Chairman took the tiller and kept us off the rocks, assisted by J, and supported by all the leaders, parents and scouts. Many thanks as always to Sainsburys for hosting us. It is always daunting to be so much in the public eye but in fact you always meet such nice people. The reward was an evening at Atmosphere, an exhausting evening of trampolining such that only the very young or the very fit can keep the pace up.

The year ended with the scout Christmas party at the hut, with pizza, hot sausage rolls, fizzy drinks and sticky cakes; and a few days later a more refined offer at Gav and Chrissie's for the leaders with nibbles, drinks and a well-deserved moment to pause for breath.

## 2020

2020 emerged as a very challenging year for Worting Scouts, as it was for everyone. The year got underway in the usual way, but with rumours of a pandemic feeling both reassuringly distant whilst being worryingly close. Planning for the year's events was well in hand and slowly unfolding in the first two months, and then the pandemic was upon us. The 'lockdown' initially felt like it might be a temporary 'fire break' and that all would return to normal, perhaps even in time for Summer Camp at Youlbury, but this did not prove to be the case, as all histories of 2020 will tell.

The first meeting of 2020 welcomed once again Group Captain Hopkins (retired) who told the scouts all about aviation and the theory of flight, which involved paper planes and rubber band powered kits. The cold winter nights that followed were a mixture of indoor and out, with a navigation night out in the cold and navigation theory by Tim in the (relative) warm of the hut. The night hike, out and about in the deeply dark countryside around Old Basing including a bag of hot chips when we got back to the cars. Greg ran a first aid, and much more, night at the hut and Will & Suzie organised a challenging clue rich hunt which led the scouts into and around Basingstoke, then back to War Memorial Park. J and Jack ran an evening of leadership and team work all rolled up in games and challenges that were fun but also challenged the scouts to work together and the PLs to show their leadership qualities. This was then put to the test later in March, when the PLs ran a night in the hut themselves, and Greg ran an evening in the woods at Crabtree where the challenges were made more enticing through the use of caches of chocolate. And pancake night remained a firm favourite, for cooking and consuming more pancakes than seemed physically possible and slathering them in unlikely sweet concoctions.

Also in January there was an opportunity to explore the Vyne, inside and out, one Saturday and completing a navigation treasure (sweets) hunt in the adjacent Morgaston Woods, which made a nice 'local history' event. And then in February another session of conservation work with Steve and Marion at the Orchard. And we were able to hold a hut weekend at the end of February, with communal living, badge work, meals, DIY and pioneering projects, as well as an evening of games and snacks. The beginning of March saw the annual district night hike, run by Overton, this time on a really soggy evening between White Hill and Overton Scout Hut. J, Neil and Gav ran one of the four challenge bases en route and were impressed at how most teams dealt with helping each other to safely cross a crocodile infested lagoon using a series of ropes and boards. Our eldest team of Lilly, Grace, Harrison, Oliver H and Reece not only thoroughly enjoyed themselves and their independence but well deserved their celebration as winners of the Night Hike Trophy 2020. Our novice team of George, Rory, Ethan and Albert came a very creditable third. Well done Worting!

And then on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March the District Commissioner of Basingstoke West wrote; *"Good evening all, as a result of direction from the Chief Commissioner, we are to stop Scouting in Basingstoke West for the foreseeable future. This includes the District St*

*Georges Day Parade, Cyclorama and all adult meetings. As the situation progresses, we will update commentary from the District as well as the emails you will receive direct from TSA. I expect that this will continue until at least after the Easter holidays but we will see how we go. Many thanks, Josh"*

When lockdown came many cherished scout events had to be cancelled, including cyclorama, the cross London cycle challenge, St George's Day parade, family day, duck race, summer camp and expedition challenge weekends. It must be acknowledged that the scout movement moved quickly to issue guidance on how to stay safe and comply with restrictions and although it was a season of risk assessment and blossoming paperwork, which fell heavily on the shoulders of Gav, Chrissie and Neil, a whole new way of having scout meetings rapidly fell into place. We must also acknowledge that this was possible because Zoom, the online meeting app, allowed the whole scouting movement free access to their platform, without which the whole task would have been much more daunting (if not impossible).

Once we had got over the shock of lockdown and found our feet with the new technology (thanks in great part to Julie from Beavers, Sam from cubs and Andy from scouts who between them navigated us to our unlikely destination) Zoom meetings started up and provided a weekly opportunity to come together. A great emphasis was placed on opening online badge work, with different leaders playing to their strengths and scrutinising the submissions for different badges, to allow those scouts who wished to do so to use their lockdown time to develop new skills. At least half of the scouts gained badges in this way.

Whilst I don't think anyone would swap the familiarity of friends and fun on a Thursday night, or a hike in crisp frosty air towards the prospect of hot vinegary chips, with a Zoom meeting, we all got the hang of delivering a scout programme across the ether. Zoom meetings took a little getting used to and have a very different feel to a normal meeting at the hut. They placed limitations on what could be done but also opened up other avenues which hadn't previously been explored, using some of the online resources which may have been refreshing for the younger generation as much as it was challenging for the older generation. These included online quizzes and puzzles, tasks and challenges, a talent contest, an escape room, J lead a session about recycling removing any residual confusion as to what should be in the green and black bins, Tim led a session on abilities, Rob and Philippa on social health and Greg gave a couple of cooking lessons – a noodle based oriental meal and a cashew based curry. Many games were played and often the younger leaders were able to pull these in from internet resources. We also managed a troop Forum online for the benefit of new scouts who joined us from cubs in the autumn. Some sessions were led by individual scouts, Claire and Mags leading an origami session, Dylan a murder mystery, Rory, Oliver S and River quizzes. There was also an excellent illustrated talk by Ed Hack about his cycle ride to Australia to raise money for the homeless. Ed used the skills he learnt at scouts to survive a cycle ride across Europe, the Middle East, across the Pamir Highway 'at the top of the world', India and the Burmese peninsular, but had to get a flight to carry him over water to Australia itself. An inspiration as to where scouting can take you.

To compensate for the general state of lockdown the Zoom sessions continued after the end of summer term with only a small break between summer and autumn term. Fewer scouts availed themselves of the opportunity to do badge work and those attending Zoom sessions did tend to drop off. But a zoom meeting does not fill the same place as a meeting with uniform, parade, games and face to face contact and so that is perhaps not unexpected. Over the summer as rules relaxed Gav and Chrissie managed to get some COVID-19 scout rule compliant canoe sessions achieved in small 'family bubble based' numbers over several weekends. They also organised two 'self-lead' treasure hunt style family bike ride circuits and the Worting walkabout treasure hunt for families to do in their bubbles at a time of their choosing to keep their scouts scouting.

We must also thank all the individuals and families who went to the hut separately over the summer to carry out repairs and maintenance. Special mentions for the Gillies, Green, Adair, Jacobs, McAllister, Perman/Scott, Clark and De Giorgio families are due.

In the autumn term some relaxing of the restrictions did allow outdoor meetings, which were given priority in the lighter evenings, and navigation, games, challenges and conservation pulling ragwort at Down Grange Meadow were run – separated into two rule compliant groups which alternated. This did require a greater draw on leaders to cover two sets of activities in separate locations. None the less a good deal of ground was covered. There was 'clue based' navigation around Worting Village, compass bearings in Stratton Park, 'What.three.words' circuit in Morgaston Woods, fitness exercises for the five muscle groups, wide games, football and a quiz that involved trekking all around War Memorial Park. We also met at the Lime Pits for wide games and, when it got dark torch Morse code to find chocolate prizes. Gav and Chrissie focused those sufficiently mature and experienced on planning for their Expedition Challenge once the lockdowns have ended.

It was also in the autumn that we heard that Gav had been awarded the British Empire Medal – not only was it well deserved, but all of us swelled with pride to have been associated with his achievements. Although awarded to Gav everyone at Worting and anyone who has read this history will know that it was equally deserved – and so has been universally regarded as applying to - Chrissie as well. Philippa Scott pulled the submission together and had no trouble finding people who would put their names and offer their stories towards the submission. And from Gav's point of view, he cherished the thought that his (and Chrissie's) award came not from 'time served' but from a ground swell of admiration and affection from his friends and scouts. The Chairman of Basingstoke West wrote:

*I am delighted to be able to share the news that one of our own, Gavin Clark, has been awarded a British Empire Medal.*

*For those of you who don't know Gavin, he joined the organisation as an adult in 1970 and has since held many roles. He has been everything from Assistant Scout Leader, Assistant Group Scout Leader, Group Scout Leader, Executive Committee Member, County Training Advisor, and County Assessor for Canoeing & Kayaking. Currently, Gavin*

*is Assistant Group Scout Leader at Worthing Scout Group as well as supporting Denali Explorers and continuing in his roles as County Assessor, Training Advisor and DofE assessor.*

*This award for Gavin is richly deserved and I am delighted that the recognition has been given.*

In November J gave a presentation about Worthing at War, the scouts at war and the names on the Worthing war memorial in preparation for Remembrance Sunday as there would be no parade this year and so the presentation was to stand in as a moment for the scouts to 'Remember them...', although on the Remembrance Sunday a Worthing scout wreath was laid in a socially distanced ceremony at the memorial at 11 O'clock. It looked very quiet without all the Scouts, Cubs and Beavers there on parade.

There was no fund raising bag packing at Sainsburys this year, but there was a bag packing treat at the 4 Kingdoms arranged by Stuart. The scouts and the cubs were let loose in 4 Kingdoms in compliant bubble groups, and had access to all the facilities, such as laser quest, bouncy 'blisters', go carts and games. Several new scouts were invested that night, as the only night we had got together as a full troop since Covid struck, and it was no doubt memorable for them atop the castle walls at Four Kingdoms, illuminated from below and in sight of a gathered but spread out troop. It was none the less a high point to leave a pretty unusual year.

## 2021

2021 proved to be an equally unusual year as covid mutated and spread and the infection alert level rose and fell according to the season. It proved to be another strange year to do scouting, as we have moved from full lockdown and absolute reliance on Zoom meetings, to stages of partial lockdown where scouting was given dispensation to meet in controlled circumstances. None the less the troop and the leaders, particularly Gav and Chrissie, have risen to the challenge, and the Zoom meetings gave an opportunity for some of our more remote young leaders at University up and down the country to chip in their valuable experience from afar.

We started the year relying on our Zoom meetings, always weaving elements of fun and serious topics into a mix that could be enjoyed. The topics covered wellbeing, from Rob and Philippa; Tim's fascinating expeditionary past and top tips to the scouts; Greg's cooking skills, (hopefully brownies are now a family favourite the scouts can produce for their loved ones); lambing with Stuart McFarlane at the Four Kingdoms (via a link of course); 3d printing and technology by Andy Butler who demonstrated making a covid mask on his printer; canoeing, kit, planning and safety with Susie, Colin and Joel; Joel and Charlie looked at creative engineering; and Charlie and Hugh ran an on line escape room linked to Jack in the hut. Will Scott led us through wood and wood working and Jack ran fun quizzes and games. And, if you can imagine it, Colin sat in his bath tub wearing all sorts of clothing to demonstrate their varying waterproofing characteristics.

As the outdoor meetings became an option – lockdown, weather and lighter evenings coalescing – we separated into two groups generally alternating events on 'reciprocal' evenings. There was a hike for the pure joy of it from Wootton St Lawrence and it was nice to see the scouts seeing their friends again for the first time in a long time, and larking around whilst the leaders did the navigating for a change. Alternately the older scouts addressed the challenges of an Expedition Challenge in lockdown. The change over saw the younger ones have an introduction to scouts evening as many had recently moved up from Cubs. There was a 'what three words' navigation game with Rob Scott at Marnel Park alternating with a treasure hunt with Stuart at Carpenters Down. We had cycle maintenance at the hut alternating with building the "Grand Bug & Pest hotels" at Kempshott Orchard and on Down Grange. These very ambitious bug hotels will see a sizable population of insects through the winter, although it was alarming to learn that the spider residents would feed on the other residents through the cold months. There were also Thursday evenings sessions of canoeing on the canal from Sheffield Bottom on the Kennet and Avon, and Tim led a hike around Hannington where J was on hand to supply his history knowledge.

In addition to the Thursday events, some of the older scouts did their expedition challenge in adapted circumstances hiking locally in early April around North Warnborough and Holybourne, but returning home rather than camping. Gav and Colin

ran a six week paddle power course for those who want to learn how to kayak and canoe. Later in May Tim led an all day cycle ride across beautiful Hampshire from Micheldever Wood via Arlesford and back home to Basingstoke, with thanks to the Jack, Will and Ryan. It took them up hill and down dale and through some lovely Hampshire Countryside, and it is fair to say tired but happy scouts were returned to their families.

In June Gavin, Tim, Suzie and Will took a team of scouts for a day of canoeing, ice cream and water splashing on the canal at Newbury. The swans and geese seemed unconcerned by so many invaders, the park provided entertainment on the outward journey, as did the need to limbo under the low footbridge, and the lunch time stop in a beautiful spot enticed most into the water. Yet more tired and happy scouts.

In July we had a meeting at Middle Copse and enjoyed a few wide games and some hot dogs around the fire. Later in July we had our traditional end of summer term where we combined a barbeque with canoeing at Colt Hill. As always a lovely canoe trip along the canal for an hour or so, followed my mad water games at the wharf getting everyone soaked and topped off with a hot sausage in a bun (or more usually two).

Summer camp this year was at Youlbury near Oxford and our camp site was on the flat area in front of the original scout pavilion. It felt like we were camping in the footsteps of scouting history. Saturday was spent setting up camp and then in the evening we all had a gentle stroll around the site to orientate ourselves, and to discover Overton scout troop setting up camp along the way. Some of the benefits of Youlbury are the on-site activities which allowed the scouts to pit themselves against some team-work and often 'at height' challenges. On our first full day, Sunday, crate stacking (the co-operative process of building the stack and the inevitable collapse leaving the scouts dangling from their harnesses) and 'High all Aboard' were enjoyed by everyone – the sight of successive foursomes of scouts balanced on the top of a foot-wide pole having climbed to the top 30ft off the ground was both scary and impressive. The afternoon was spent with half the troop canoeing down the Thames to beautiful Sandford Lock and the other half whittling under J's careful instruction. The teams then swapped with the older ones heading for the river.

On Monday hi-viz jackets and helmets were donned and the troop cycled in to Oxford. Here they rendezvoused at the Natural History Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum and were given ample time to explore. The Pitt Rivers museum is crammed to the rafters with objects from around the world, and the Natural History Museum has fossils, skeleton and geological specimens (and a very popular gift shop). When their intellectually curiosity had been satiated they took themselves off to a local park for an ice cream. Then, as they cycled onward through town they found at various locations J, in tour guide mode with Panama hat to match, to explain the history and architecture of one of the most beautiful historic towns to be found anywhere in the world.

Tuesday morning was spent on site, undertaking fiercely competitive time trials on the pedal cart circuit or having a go at the wide variety of games in a giant treasure chest. Axe and saw, pioneering and basic scout-craft followed, with fires being lit and an array of 'experimental' cooking undertaken, some of which proved edible. No worries, we all knew that better was to come – Chef Greg's curry night! Knowing that the offer was impossible to resist we had invited some of the international camp staff – after all the Scouts needed to fulfil the requirement of their World Challenge 'to make contact with Scouts from another country'. Our guests included instructors from Venezuela & Malawi who were only too glad to swap stories of scouting at home for a good feed! It was off to our camp fire then; we had invited Overton and, hearing all the noise, several other groups joined us too. A grand occasion orchestrated by the Lewis Grey twins and supported by the efforts of a number of the troop in providing fireside sketches, with Jack an ever popular comic turn.

Wednesday was time for urban foraging. The title was disturbing, especially when half the troop disappeared for the pleasures of a canoeing trip into Oxford and beyond. The younger ones were ferried into town, told that the leaders thought that it was time they looked after themselves, asked to sort themselves into teams and provided with £4 each to buy food for their three course evening meal – which of course had to indicate they completely understood the value of a balanced diet and could account for every penny spent. Suffice to say that decision-making was protracted! We had packed a lunch-time picnic so took the shoppers to Port Meadow 'beach' to play ball games whilst awaiting the older contingent of canoeists. Their arrival coincided with not only rain but thunder and lightning too, although if rain was necessary it couldn't have chosen a better occasion than when everybody was suitably attired for water antics. Lunch inhaled, the older ones set off for their ram-raid on Tesco's whilst the youngsters canoed back downstream. Back at camp, time for the culinary masterpieces. Some really tasty meals were created, with impressive albeit sometimes questionable rationale as to what counted as protein, fruit and veg!

On Thursday the Scouts headed for the adrenaline-inducing activities again – this time Jacob's Ladder and climbing. Team-work was essential as, working in pairs, they assisted each other to scale the widely spaced logs of the ladder or belayed one another on the wall – with constant encouragement from those awaiting their turns. Come lunchtime we were delighted to welcome back Tom Humberstone, now a PhD student at Oxford and famed for his winning form as a Varsity rugby player. Though significantly meatier than when we had last seen him his Worting roots shone through, immediately joining Greg on the griddle to cook up a fajita feast to satisfy all. Enough relaxation – up went the call to prepare to hike – all the way to South Hinksey open air pool. It's a great spot with fountains and water jets but not for the faint hearted – definitely cool! Time for a picnic in the park before heading back to the site, uphill this time so a suitably warming experience..

Friday was a really rainy day that found us cycling once more, this time down into Abingdon via the Thames towpath for much of the way to find another outdoor swimming pool. The rain seemed a lot less wet when actually in this pool and we had nearly exclusive use, very few locals being daft enough to join in! The bonus was that it was warmer than the previous day and, although rain did not dampen the enjoyment, a very tasty hot chocolate from the shop was a welcome finale. It has to be said that the remainder of the day was pure relief. We had made it through all the activities without any mishap and with the morning's Covid tests all having proved negative we could relax, knowing that we had reached the last day without any of our campers having developed an infection. Having very cautiously kept everybody apart during meal times, eating under the event shelters, we could at last all congregate around a single huge dining table in the mess tent and enjoy the last night banter. Everybody having a say, lots of laughter, lots of fun - this was how Scout Camp should be.

Then home on Saturday after packing up camp. The other benefit of camping so close at Youldbury is that drop off and pick up were done by the parents who could then also enjoy seeing where the scouts camped. Our best Scout at camp was Dan Adair and recipient of the Nash Award Claire Jennings, both excellent adverts for Worting and for Scouting.

Towards the end of the summer in early September, in replacement of the Family camp that had to be cancelled as the rules for such gatherings were too unpredictable we had a Family Funday instead. Hosted on the lawn of writing House, to whom many thanks, it was an opportunity for Scouts, Cubs and Beavers along with their families to gather and enjoy the company, the weather, the setting, eating and games, as well as having a well-attended AGM. Delightfully some faces from the past turned up as well. The hot 'sausage and burger in a bun' food was ably organised by Greg Catlin as ever. The mums and dads (and grandparents often) enjoyed the 'picnic in the park' atmosphere whilst their scouts burnt off their inevitable surplus of energy in the games provided like gnats around the picnickers. There were many games and activities, many were 'help yourself' and some were competitive, such as welly wanging – well done Jack Hopkins for the longest throw, at 34 metres – and there were bouncy castles and inflatable games. Jack was also awarded his wood beads and went on to show his entertainment talents when he and the Lewis Grey twins lead the campfire entertainment. The hot 'sausage and burger in a bun' food was ably organised by Greg Catlin as ever.

In the winter term as usual we had a couple of nights addressing cooking skills, with the 'ready steady cook' evening early in the term where free rein allowed the scouts to turn their random ingredients in to culinary masterpieces. Later in the term was a full cooking competition, with menu, pricing, table layout, two cooked dishes and a third cold. In the absence of a District Cooking competition due to covid restrictions the normal 'hut eliminator' round became the final and expert judges, Sam Bliss and Neil & Nicola Quimby Bray, observed, tasted, gave helpful feedback and encouragement and selected a winning team. The standard in all respects was very high and all three teams produced

quality menus and tasty food. We will never know how they would have been tested against other district teams but the quality of the winning team meal would have been a serious contender for the District Trophy.

Also at the hut J ran an international themed evening where the scouts were able to reflect on how life experience is different around the world and how living in UK compares to other places. Later, another evening was devoted to the crafty arts, cunningly before Christmas so that cards and ceramic decoration gifts could be produced. But many of the other activities in the winter term were assisted in their covid compliance by taking place outdoors. Andy Butler ran an evening out and about on Beggarwood Down, which will stay forever in the memory due to the heavy cold rain which dissolved the paper on which we wrote our answers and chilled the bones of all of those who were not young enough to generate warmth through energy expenditure on the play equipment.

Tim Clark led an evening of wide games and orienteering on compass bearings at Down Grange which was half and half in twilight then darkness. Later in the term he led a night hike starting and finishing at The Hatch and exploring navigation in the dark around the local countryside. It was a good healthy yomp rewarded by hot chips at the end. The sight of scouts cold breath hanging in the air around them, chatting in groups eating chips, the smell of chips and vinegar and the odd 'looted chip' by leaders and Mums and Dads is always a favourite memory. We also had a night of sausage sizzle and wide games at Middle Copse on November 11<sup>th</sup> organised by Jack and Gregg. Because of covid attendance at remembrance parade on the Sunday was restricted to the flag bearers and so J that night led a small remembrance reflection moment by the bonfire to make sure all remembered why we normally attend a remembrance service and why taking a moment to reflect was at least an annual duty. On the Sunday flag bearers from each section went to the church with two leaders. The church was still full despite the absence of the scouts, but I think they were missed when the community gathered by the memorial, when a ranks of young people much lift the occasion. The troop were also represented at the town memorial.

There was a hut weekend in October, with crafts and skills, cooking and pioneering (building a high level rope bridge between two pylons). Colin, Suzie and Will also ran a Sunday canoe trip on the Thames for the intrepid, including a diversion along St Patrick's Stream where the current flow, deviations and overgrowth provide significant 'entertainment'. Thanks to dads Ryan and Mark who were roped in to tow the canoe trailer to Reading and from Henley thus making this trip possible.

An autumn conservation day at the Orchard in September with Steve and Marian concentrated on cutting back the bramble that was choking some shrubs and putting out feelers across the grass. As always 'many hands made light work' and it was gratifying by the end of the day to see how much had been cut back and how much was on the burn pile.

There was an evening of swimming at Cranbourne pool which mixed splash fun with swimming badge work.

In the run up to Christmas Covid on the last week it was decided to cancel the scout Christmas party and move it to the first meeting of the new year as it could have spoiled family the Christmas plans of a large number of families if the scout party had proved to be a vector for spreading covid so close to long awaited family get togethers. This meant that the last meeting of the term was a 'blow out' at Four Kingdoms' organised by Stuart McFarlane, where there was lots to do and at the same time plenty of outdoor fresh air to keep the covid risk down.

2021 saw Chief Scout Gold badges being awarded to Isabelle Lyness, Lilly-Ella Butler, Freddie McAllister, Oliver Scully, Reece Sloane and Grace Insley. Well done all of you.

## 2022

This year of Scouting with Worting is one which has climbed out of the Covid restrictions and started to feel much more like a normal year, in all but weather as every season competed to be unlike or over state its true identity.

In unseasonably warm weather in January we made more of an outdoor programme than the season would usually dictate and went out with J on a hike around town with a 'local history' theme and on the last Sunday of the month climbed Beacon Hill 'for the fun' and 'for the views'. It was bracing as a climb, although the mountain goat like scouts scampered up-hill quite happily, the views were excellent making our picnic lunch very enjoyable, and the story of the site as explained by J caught the imagination. There was also a chance for the scouts to try out the hiking shelters so that they would know what to do if these were ever needed in an emergency.

We had many outdoor challenges and many of the indoor meetings have been to prepare for cycling, canoeing and expedition challenges that are the highlights of the scout programme. We had a spring term hut weekend in February and a spring clean conservation day at the Orchard. Our work in the orchard is very much appreciated and after many years of doing a bit and a bit we can really see what a difference we make.

The District Night Hike was a wild, wet and windy night but all those taking part rose to the challenge. Jack and J ran a 'how to cross a crocodile infested river' base. J's answer to the request for a risk assessment was, "the river will be imaginary and the crocodiles infesting it likewise. If a scout falls in we will imagine that they avoid drowning and evade the crocodiles. If they imagine that an injury does result from a fall into the imaginary river, we will imagine that we rescue them, heroically of course, and are awarded bravery medals. We will imagine that we administered first aid to any imaginary crocodile inflicted bites'. That alongside a proper risk assessment as well, that's only fair.

The cyclorama organised by Gav was on a warm - but not too warm - Sunday, and scout teams and family teams from across the district enjoyed following clues around Basingstoke. We have been out on hikes, challenges and an Easter egg hunt which ended in the dark such that we think that the wildlife of Crabtree Plantation had an Easter treat too. We've In the hut too for cycle maintenance and games organised by the patrol leaders.

St George's day attendance was rewarded by a trip to Milestones, although strict applied (and enforced) museum rules about accompanied minors meant that it almost turned into a guided walk with J who luckily seemed to know an awful lot about an awful lot. All those brains in one little head.

Duck Race Sunday at Bartons Mill was a fun packed fund raiser and a great success. Under Ben Mills' enthusiastic leadership it is rapidly becoming the key fund raising event of the calendar. Another traditional calendar milestone was the canoeing and barbeque at Colt Hill on the last evening of summer term. It seemed like there were more people than ever, more fun to be had, and more sausages in buns consumed than ever before, with thanks to Gav and Colin for organising all the waterside fun, and Jack and Chrissie for the hot food.

This year saw a repeat of our famous Bath to Wales cycling trip. The weather was very warm and the first day's cycling brought us from Bath to Bristol. Young Lidia gave us all a scare by going head on into a cyclist (who, bless him, did not make a fuss even though Greg had to administer first aid). Lidia did not come off too well and was whisked to A & E to have her hand checked. Although no longer fit to cycle she elected to stay with us, riding in the back-up cars on day two. The overnight was in the Bristol Sea Scout HQ, right by the town and waterfront activity which seems to be the focus of the city's night life. We all enjoyed a walk amongst the frivolity but then whilst the scouts and older leaders turned in, some of the younger leaders went into town to get a better taste of Bristol at night. The next day we proceeded to Wales, being allowed through the new coastal defence works, making us the first official users of the new cycle path, a fact rewarded very kindly by the developers Bam Nuttall, with smart new water bottles. By the time we got to Wales, pick up and the home journey, the riders were all very tired, and it was widely reported that the passengers snoozed all the way home.

And so the adventures continued, this time with our very own P & O Cruise weekend. Although the overnight stay was the height of luxury we have to confess that Worting's version involves parents, offspring, canoes and kayaks rather than the anything grander. What a fantastic weekend though, mums, dads, scouts and leaders canoeing on the Thames or walking alongside it to the luxury boathouse on the riverbank at Caversham. After a welcome Helen Hopkins feast there was a gentle stroll to the riverside park, heavily populated by hundreds of ducks, geese, swans and their 'contributions'. A convivial evening was spent back at the boathouse, or on the way back to the boathouse, Scouts and the Cherishable Team making the most of the chance to play games and claim the best sleeping places, including those on the balcony overlooking the river. A very, very special location and one to which we were delighted to return. There was no hanging about the next day as it was back to the boats and onwards down the Thames to its confluence with the Kennet and Avon Canal. It's a real thrill to be part of a team canoeing through the middle of Reading Town Centre and then paddling onwards on the apparently quietest of stretches and yet within a stone's throw of the myriad of hectic city highways. Without the helpful flow of a river the canal made the team work really hard to reach the familiar Sheffield Bottom Lock but Ps and Os will long remember their unique cruise!

Family camp was now possible again and was booked into Garners Field, with all the usual fun, food and activities. The camp fire was particularly well organised by Jack and Joel and Aaron (the life's good twins). Sunday's games were organised around a royalty theme and princesses were much in evidence.

Summer Camp this year was led by Jack and Greg as part of the leadership's succession training and was very good. The troop attended the Jamborette at Kernow which was a long distance to travel but gave the scouts the opportunity to meet other groups and do a wide range of activities. The day on the beach and the Kernopoly event were most popular as was an impromptu hike to a charming local valley where more natural exploring and paddling took place. Our first day was setting up camp, and young Jack Wheeler got stuck in helping and encouraging, a sign of things to come! Day two was a chance to get to know the other troops on our camp. We organised camp doughnuts for anyone and everyone, but with some unusual flavours to make it like Russian roulette. That was enjoyed by everyone including those that got a coffee doughnut. We also had a visit from a young scout who was doing card tricks as her 'getting to know you' activity. We had an outdoor activity day with a range of things to do including skate boarding, archery, shooting and more. There was a day on the beach with surfing lessons, sand castles and fun. We had a morning learning about Shelter Box and joining in some

imaginary earthquake scenarios, and met the most amazing scout leader, who was old, wise, was a star gazer, had meteorites in his pocket and was awarded his 60 years as a leader certificate one evening. The scouts voted him the coolest leader on camp. The indoor craft afternoon was not to everybody's taste and a mutiny was avoided when Jack took us off camp to a wooded valley, with a stream and the ruins of old mills, which the scouts enjoyed exploring, paddling and finding archaeology in the stream bed. Much more enjoyable to the Worting scouts was the fire lighting, outdoor cooking and shelter making. But the activity that got the biggest thumbs up was the day out on buses and trains exploring the area, collecting points for visiting key locations and basically treating the world like a summer holiday.

In the evenings there was entertainment, music and dancing, some of which needed the leaders present, much of which then scouts were able to join and enjoy as they pleased, or stay on camp with friends playing games, chatting and watching J whittle a linstock from a stick that he found. Andy Butler and his drone were put to good use by the organisers to get aerial shots of the events and of course Andy also got shots of our camp. The food was excellent, master-minded by Greg, who did not just fuel the scouts but went out of his way to broaden their culinary experiences. But soon enough the end of camp arrived, and packing up is just as hard but less exciting than arriving. It was a long morning packing and then a long drive home, bless the drivers and the Wheeler family who arrived to do the trailer towing.

The Nash award was won by Lauren Hollingshead for the kindly way in which she shepherded the younger girls and the best scout on camp was Magdalena de Giorgio.

After a much deserved summer break the autumn term had, as usual, a strong cooking theme, with Ready Steady Cook organised by our gourmet leader, Greg. This was followed by a self-managed team cooking competition which produced some fantastic culinary masterpieces. Many thanks to Helen and Samm for acting as a judges. One evening was dedicated to the 'digital world' with Will and Suzie. Suzie and Colin prepared the scouts for on-water safety, a prerequisite to our future canoe trips which are always popular, and following on from the canoeing evenings and Sunday organised by Gavin and Colin. There was a night where healthy living and inclusivity were explored. Early in December an evening was spent using crafts as an example of reuse and recycling, with some lovely things made, as well as things that whilst illustrating the principles did not find a loving home and continued on their journey into the recycling.

There was also an evening of wide games at Middle Copse. Jack led an evening using the Hatch Warren orienteering course to develop leadership, navigation and compass bearings and Tim led a night hike around Hannington which ended with the ever -popular bag of chips. Greg, incidentally, captured the quintessential photograph of scouts silhouetted against a sunset climbing a stile. There was another hike around Sherborne St John. Late in November we had a night out with Jack and J following riddles to win prizes.

The numbers at Remembrance parade were smaller than usual but the parade and the behaviour were as always of a high standard, and it remains important to the troop to attend the Worting war memorial to show respect and remembrance.

The Hut weekend was in late October, and as usual involved a mix of games, crafts, cooking, pioneering, woodwork, DIY and much more. It was well attended by the scouts and well

supported by the leaders, almost all turning up at some point over the weekend. Chrissie did her bit towards tackling the cost of living crisis by blind tasting several staples to reveal that cheaper in-house offerings were as acceptable as expensive brands.

A day was spent at the Orchard helping the Kempshott Conservation volunteers doing dead hedging and on another weekend four 4 scouts went to PL training camp at Lyons Copse with Chrissie and J. Gav and J gathered some staves from Lambs Field for whittling or use in pioneering.

In December the end of year treat was do-nutting at the Alpine Centre, Aldershot, which was clearly greatly enjoyed and good feedback has been given. The scout year ended as usual with a traditional Christmas party of foods and games, Christmas cards and much fun was had by everybody.

The Mayor's reception in November saw the presentation of Chief Scout Gold awards and due congratulations to Claire Jennings, Mags De Giorgio and Dan Adair, all of whom have moved on to Explorers and are much missed by the troop, but Claire will be representing Worting at the coming World Scout International Jamboree and Dan at the European event. And so closes another successful year for Worting scouts.

## **2023**

The new year 2023 programme kicked off with a troop forum to discuss the sort of programme and sort of troop that the scouts aspired to, although the 'money no object' option so favoured by the scouts was firmly taken off the table. With the winter hanging on the outdoor events were dark and generally pretty chilly. Tim organised a photo and clue quiz that involved navigating around the town centre. Greg put together some practical first aid training outdoors at Cowdreys Down, covering outdoor first aid issues and fittingly hypothermia. Luckily one base was 'how to make a hot chocolate outdoors', which refreshed the spirits. This was followed the next week with indoor first aid with Greg, which focused on more indoor situations including rehearsing how to call for an ambulance correctly. We also had a night of both indoor and outdoor activity at the Kempshott hut. Divided into two alternating halves one team played a game of inflatable zorbs in the hut whilst the other did night time navigation using bearings around Stratton Park. Stu sent them out and about at night-time hunting for glow sticks, and other games, at Crabtree plantation.

Indoors we had pancake night, which is always very popular and remarkable for the sugary sticky concoctions that accompany the pancake itself. Gone are the days when lemon and sugar would suffice. On another night the patrol leaders Calum and Ben led an evening of games and tasks, including building a bridge out of spaghetti and glue as part of their leadership challenge. They did very well. J ran a night about Shelterbox, a charity we hope to support, with building shelters out of 'found' material and obstacle races carrying heavy boxes. Colin introduced them to the dos and don'ts of scuba diving and canoeing in relation to bio security (not spreading invasive species) and the equipment. It was then time to try diving with a special 'try dive' in the pool at Lord Wandsworth College, which was thoroughly enjoyed by the nine participants.

The scouts had the opportunity to do conservation work in Lambs Field early in the year before the bird nesting season, clearing scrub to enable the local conservation volunteers to do some hedge laying. It is always great to introduce the scouts to nature conservation issues but also to see, with parental and leader help, just how much of a difference they can make. Ed Hack, dipping his toe into leadership having been a scout a few years ago, led a Sunday of street sports at the skate board park, which was greatly enjoyed to be followed by a second later in the year when the scouts demonstrated notable improvement in their skills and confidence. Gang Show in February entertained many and meant that Izzy Wright, Henry and Oliver Packer had plenty to keep them busy in the preceding 6 months. There was also a Hut Weekend, with a motorised treasure hunt, cooking, games, badge work, preparation for the expedition challenge, and so much more. The Purbeck expedition in April stretched the navigation prowess of the five-man team, as did the mud, but they returned with fantastic photos of the varied terrain – coast, country and heathland - with a generous distribution of sheep, highland cattle, steam trains, snowdrops and water!

To celebrate St George's Day and the King's Coronation there was an event organised by the District at War Memorial Park where games and fun, accompanied by a picnic lunch, was put on. Gav ran a five week kayak and canoeing course on the Basingstoke Canal with Colin, Will and Suzie, then one evening meeting in June was a canoe trip up the Kennet and Avon Canal, encouraging the newly skilled canoeists. In late May we had the annual fund raising Duck Race which once more proved to be the fun family event it was evolving into, with families enjoying the food and drink at Bartons Mill in the sunshine of the garden by the river. There were fund raising games, canoeing and duck catching in the river and generally all round good fun. Claire Jennings was there raising money for her Jamboree trip in the summer of which more later. In the summer term the weather was more accommodating to outdoor activity and the outdoor and hut mix became a little more benign.

Cycling was a big theme this term, with the need to prepare for the Cyclorama district event in April organised by Tim Chrissie and Gav. and for the cycling across London event in May. Cyclorama participants were required to seek mapped locations, matching each to a photo that indicated where to find the answer to a question. Of the ten teams Stanley Harris and his dad Rob were the deserving overall winners, being the only pair willing to take an additional muddy woodland loop. The family teams of Duffin, Packer/Spicer and Insley scored equally and had to be separated by the time that they took. Our unaccompanied scout team did Worting proud in coming second. The London cycling adventure was a tried and tested route from Waltham Cross down the Lee Valley via Olympic Park to Stepney with an overnight stay in the Rowland Phillips Roland Philipps Scout HQ, offset by a walk to City Farm and a veritable hike to the Tower of London just in case there hadn't been enough exercise that day! Pedalling exploits the second day encompassed the Regents Canal, London Zoo, Paddington Basin, Hyde Park, Buckingham Palace, Horseguards, Westminster, Cycle Super Highway 8, Battersea Park, the Putney Wetland Centre and, finally and triumphantly, the finish at Richmond Park. It was a 50 mile marathon in terms of organisation and of achievement for eleven plucky scout participants

Thursday nights included an evening of navigating around Marnel Park with Will and Suzie. There was a hike all the way to Oakley with games at the end organised by Jack and River as patrol leaders. Very well done. Jack and Greg organised a bike ride from Farleigh Wallop to War Memorial Park and Greg also did an evening at the hut looking at all the different aspects of healthy living. Jack put together an evening of fun, with games, outdoors cooking and shelter

building in Middle Copse and J, with the help of Richenda Power at 'Hillside' recreated a glimpse of past years. 'Hillside' was the home of Mrs Bullock, who (if you have read from the beginning you will know) helped the Worting scouts and often provided a hearty tea. Having set up a small table of historical scout items in the garden J and Richenda took the scouts to Lambs Field where a glorious wild flower meadow awaited exploration and education. They returned to the garden for a 'hearty tea' in Edwardian style prepared by Mrs Hopkins.

At the beginning of June was family camp organised by Sam, with more attendees than ever before. It was a weekend of games, good hearty food and fun activities. There was canoeing, climbing, abseiling, water bottle rockets, crafts and field games, and on Sunday was a family team It's a Knockout.

Hopes for a canoe expedition faltered when planned trips to both the Medway and the Wey didn't meet acceptable criteria. Scouts did however eventually make it to Cricklade to begin an exploration of the upper reaches of the Thames. A detailed reconnaissance paddle experienced more water than was present on the chosen July date just two weeks later! Reed bed jungles, current variations and lolloping trees made progress 'interesting' and provided a unique adventure. Only as the river and the view widened on the approach to the overnight camp did simple canoeing progress become feasible. Kit barrels revealed their contents in Lechlade – a range of different tents to trial and a range of different lightweight food with which to experiment – all useful considerations for trips to come. Day two was comparatively relaxed, the Thames now flowing wide and free – so soothing in fact that an extended post-lunch session of jumping off canoes and messing about in the river was a necessity. Happy days! The less experienced canoeists didn't miss out, undertaking a full day's paddle on a section of the Basingstoke Canal further to the east than our normal haunts. Lunch in a thunderstorm under a bridge was timed to perfection. The last full meeting of the term was, as always, an opportunity for canoeing at Colt Hill, playing in the water and enjoying a hot sausage in a bun from the barbeque.

Summer Camp in July was organised by Will and Suzie who did an excellent job, Will having passed his minibus licence in order to transport the scouts. The camp site they selected was Brockmead, on the hills above the Severn near Bristol. Looking west you could see the Severn Bridge. It was a most extraordinary camp put together by local volunteers over nearly two decades and had all the facilities a scout camp could want, including camping areas, wild woods, a zip wire, crate stacking, a pizza oven, 'movie venue', caving system, two mud ovens, a whittling workshop area, showers and toilets and plenty of space for letting off steam. It also seemed to have its own special sunsets which were glorious. With Greg in charge of the kitchen the food was tasty and adventurous and the scouts had their taste buds and palates educated.

Camp was set up in the rain on Saturday after which was time enough to explore the site. Sunday was spent on site enjoying the onsite activities, with low ropes (and time trials with different handicaps such as carrying a cup of water and trying not to spill it), ziplining across a valley, and of course running back for as many other goes as time allowed; and crate stacking where team work would result in the biggest tower); Pioneering where an oversized seesaw was made with poles, tires, rub by Tim and Gav practice rope; conservation of the site and whittling run by J and Suzie, and most days thereafter found at least a few scouts sat with J working on their whittling projects.

On Monday was a mystery hike. Three groups were dropped off at locations and had to navigate their way back to the campsite. Then after games and dinner we were off to Portishead Open Air Pool, where we watched the sun go down whilst variously playing or relaxing in the pool. After swimming we walked up the hill that was behind the pool and watched the big container ships plying their trade in the Bristol Channel, in a tribute to Dock of the Bay. Tuesday found us at Weston Super Mare, revolving around a day at the beach but the scouts swarmed the pier, played minigolf and explored the town. Lunch was on the beach and swimming and sandy games kept everyone entertained. In the evening the scouts were challenged to buy and make their own tea on a budget, with some innovative taste combos resulting. Wednesday found us at the Bristol Aviation Museum which included the history of the Bristol aviation company, aircraft objects and dressing up opportunities. After lunch we gathered under the wings of Concorde for a group photo. That evening under Gregs tutelage they made pizzas from scratch including the dough on outdoor pizza oven with a campfire in the rain. To close the day was a cinema experience with popcorn to get out of the rain. Brother Bear was chosen for Movie Night!

On Thursday we hiked to the Wild Place Project, a wildlife centre that concentrate don conservation. The biggest hit was the bear and wolf enclosure and many of us were lucky enough to see the bears climbing down the tree and going for an amble, whilst the wolves prowled the same enclosure. That evening was Aqua Run, a swimming pool adventure with lots of fun, races against each other and inflatable obstacle course. Scouts and leaders worked off lots of energy, although J and Chrissie were happy to stay on camp and prepare the hot chocolate! Friday was the last full day and we hiked to Blaise Castle Park, with a barbeque lunch prepared by Greg, much playing in woods and the swing park. J took a party of volunteers to the small but excellent museum (via the ice cream can) and others climbed to the castle at the top of the hill. We were at last joined by the irrepressible uber scout Bruno, Will and Suzie's dog. On the last night we had a BIG campfire! And then all too soon it was time to come home after another great summer camp. Saturday found us packing up in the rain!

On Sunday at the closing ceremony Best Scout on Camp was awarded to River and we broke slightly with tradition by presenting the Nash award to Joel and Aaron, the caring Lewis Grey twins for their unstinting support to the scouts.

Over the summer the hut underwent a refurbishment. Although we have no secure tenancy hut maintenance is still needed and it was agreed to invest some of the available funds on vital work to ensure the hut remains safe, sound, clean and warm. A new kitchen was fitted by Beaver Dad Matt Kirkbride and his team from Creo Cabinet Makers, a hot water system was installed by Beaver and Cub Dad Steve Martin from Smart Heat UK, with electrical compliance and installations done by ex-Worting Dad Grant Rogers from MIFORMAT LTD. Toilets and windows were purchased, and the windows and doors were installed by Beaver Dad Mitch Ravenscroft from MJR Windows and Doors. An awful lot of woodworking was done by Scout Leader Will Scott who is a carpenter. Various scout families gave of their time and expertise but the whole project was given an enormous and much needed boost by Mears the construction company one of whose employees is a beaver parent and put us forward as a possible project. Thank you Elizabeth. The Mears Foundation sent their crew of volunteers, over 30 of them each and every one of them deserving a big thank you too, to do a massive amount of hard work repairing, replacing, installing and improving, particularly the fence, some leaky feather boarding, rebuilding the kitchen end wall, installing a gate and a garden and renovating the hut top to bottom. The gratitude for their hard work cannot be understated and at the grand opening of

the hut praise was heaped on them and on the principle individuals and families that helped. Ben and Sam were ring masters coordinating the many weekends and evenings as well as leading by example when a host of families and individuals made their individual contributions, often with a paint brush in hand.

As a finale to their years with the troop, the five oldest scouts spent a September weekend narrow-boating on the Grand Union Canal. They undertook an unusual route which included having to wait for an empty lock on the Hanwell Flight to refill, plus close investigation of the complex HS2 engineering project as it intertwined with the canal on approach to Slough.

The winter term started warm and light, but as is the nature of the season the nights drew in and the weather became increasingly wet and chilly. Cooking was a main theme of the term, with Jack and J running a Ready Steady Cook evening to get the scouts ready for their challenge, a troop cooking competition following all the rules of the district event later in the term, at which we were represented by our two winning teams. Worting did very well with our Taste of the Tropics team being placed 3rd and our European Bistro team 4th out of eleven entries. We had several outdoor nights of games and navigation as well as a hike from Ellisfield to Cliddesden, with chips hot and vinegary as a reward. There was a sausage sizzle at Middle Copse organised by Stu and Jack, with a few chosen words from J in preparation for Remembrance Sunday that followed. The Sunday service was well attended by smartly dressed scouts on their best behaviour, a pleasure to be with. We almost had a fly past. A Chinook was due to fly past the Remembrance parade at War Memorial park at 11 and approached the town over our heads just a few moments before 11 (we suspect that this may have been a deliberate nod to our event as the father of one of the cubs present is aircrew at Odiham).

There was an evening swimming at Cranbourne where some had fun and some attained their swimming badges and then one evening Claire returned to the hut to tell the scouts about her adventures at the Jamboree in South Korea. The Jamboree had been on the news in the summer due to the weather and the conditions on site, but Claire reassured everyone that not only was it 'part of the experience' but that the British support swung into action and they were relocated to a hotel and then an alternative programme of events was organised at the drop of a hat to replace those being cancelled at the main site. Despite the difficulties, perhaps because of the fellow feeling it engendered, Claire had a great time, visiting many places, meeting new people and doing many exciting things, all the while flying the Worting flag at this important world scouting event. Well done Claire.

During the term we joined Marion and Steve once more to do conservation work in 'The Orchard' and J lead a party of scouts around Silchester Roman town one Saturday morning, demonstrating yet again 'all those brains in that one little head'. J and Chrissie took a party of patrol leaders to the Patrol Leader training weekend at Lyons Copse which was as always very useful for the new PLs and APLs, but coincided with an absolutely freezing weekend where the tents were stiff with frost even before we got to bed. The autumn hut weekend was kicked off by a visit to the Veolia incinerator site in Chineham, which was utterly fascinating. Its performance and operations and its green credentials were all explained by a friendly and knowledgeable staff, but the highlight was the scouts being allowed to operate the claw to grab rubbish and drop it in the furnace (all remotely controlled from a safe distance). At the hut we were visited by Emily's grandmother who was a Cub leader in South Africa who gave us a very different picture of life in a troop, where sunshine and the big outdoors are able to play a bigger

role. Theo and Arthur's granddad, although they are still at cubs and beavers, came to show scouts how to use a braille machine, negotiate obstructions using a white cane and generally answer questions about the ups and downs of being blind.

As the year drew to a close there was a chance to make Christmas cards and decorate plates for the coming season and an evening at Four Kingdoms organised by Stu. This was the scouts Christmas treat and they had great fun playing laser quest in the dark and visiting the animals and having a chance to feed and pet them. The year closed just before Christmas with a Christmas party, of good cheer, pizza and games, and we all went home, happy, weary and looking forward to a Christmas break before 2024 kicked off.

## **2024**

The year started frosty and cold and we split our time between the hut, with a forum, lashings, knots, first aid and teamwork, and outdoors with navigation, maps and bearings. Will and Suzie ran a challenge evening around War Memorial Park, whereby locating the answers to clues involved a number of different methods, including What3Words.

In February we had an evening of swimming at Cranbourne School that was the usual mix of high spirits and tepid water, larking around and working towards the staged swimming badges. The watery theme continued with a fun swim at the Aquadrome, scouts from across the District taking over the whole pool one Sunday afternoon to general delight. Not to be outdone, with their thoughts never far from water the canoe team organised for those scouts who had undertaken initial training to practice capsize drill using spray decks. On this occasion, in deference to the season, the pool at Queen Mary's College was used rather than subjecting the trainees to the usual rivers or canals for such antics.

Pancake night was as ever popular. Whilst the leaders see it as an opportunity to share some basic cooking skills with the scouts, they see it as an opportunity to eat sugary and syrupy pancakes and enjoy the jeopardy of tossing pancakes and the hilarity when the toss goes wrong. Well at least they learnt something.

Gav's night hike started in Oakley and finished north of Deane after an unscheduled wade through flood water. All was forgiven and mostly forgotten over mince pies and hot chocolate. The troop was represented by three teams at the District night hike, which took place on a thoroughly cold, wet and rainy night with slick mud underfoot, giving it bags of reason to be memorable. There was an array of challenges en route but apparently the best bit was the hot choc and hot dog at the end. Two teams also took part in the district cooking competition, adopting a tropical theme, and won 3rd and 5th places with dishes inspired by a tropical paradise - cheesy 'stingrays', jerk chicken kebabs with a mango salsa and a cake with caramelised bananas and whipped cream.

The hut weekend featured a motorised treasure hunt, whereby teams drove to specific locations on a course and created a question at each for their opponents to answer during the second half of the event. It was a popular activity and will no doubt need to be repeated on a subsequent occasion. The sewing machine made an appearance, with scouts being required to create marquee pole bags from old curtains – recycling at its best, as were the efforts to re-seam a few garments that had come adrift during their owners' over exertions. A pioneering project resulted

in an enormous bridge that was, disappointingly, declared not quite sturdy enough for walking across but provided lots of opportunity for hanging around on the end of a rope or two. Candle making, badgework and trialling of various tents and stoves kept everybody gainfully occupied on the Sunday before the mega Spring Clean finale, during which parents and youngsters were, as ever, absolute dirt warriors.

Patrols in relay formation competed against each other during Stu's evening was at the start of March, a noisy mix of skills, spills and thrills, interspersed with games that somehow involved a rubber chicken. J and Suzie ran an evening focused on disability issues and international equality. Most appropriately, hypothermia was one of the topics during Greg and Jack's practical first aid night at Cowdery Down, a timely follow up to their earlier teaching session at the hut. One Saturday morning found a small group of leaders and scouts at the Kempshott Orchard undertaking conservation work, largely creating and extending the dead hedges which help to define the orchard from the playing field and offer insects and birds a home. Some bramble bashing and clearing around the fruit trees was also achieved.

During their first three years with the troop, scouts develop practical and teamwork skills such that, in their final months, it is time to put all this together on their independent expedition challenge. After extensive planning, the Easter holidays found Emily, DJ, Ben, Tyler and Henry on the South Downs, going it alone. They did really well, coping with a complex route that involved a whole range of terrain but included entertainment c/o windmills, long distance runners, horses, disgusting soup, surprisingly good porridge, hang gliders, blister plasters and cuddles (with lambs and calves that is).

'J' led an evening about public speaking along with power point skills, in particular where these assist in giving a presentation. For fun some of the braver scouts had a go at 'Power point Karaoke' where they had to present a topic handed to them supported by random power point pictures. They had to be inventive and contort their presentation to make the images relevant to their message, resulting in much laughter.

Suzie's evening on the topic of safety in the countryside meant that all benefitted from her experiences during her outdoor pursuits degree at the University of Central Lancashire. It is becoming increasingly obvious how fortunate Worting is in having such a diverse leadership team, so very willing to share their vast array of knowledge with the current generation of young people.

The return to canoeing was welcomed by a large group of scouts and explorers who were put through their paces over five weeks on the Basingstoke Canal. The Discover course is recognised as providing basic skills in paddling both kayaks and canoes such that more training and adventures on a variety of waters can follow.

The Parent and Offspring weekend, organised by Will and Suzie was a re-run of a previous weekend some years ago but for a new generation. It was an opportunity to once again explore the ancient landscape around Avebury with 'J', who as an archaeologist has a keen eye for artefacts and landscapes. It was preceded at the hut with an evening about hiking in the countryside, safety and care of the environment. The group met at the car park at Barbury Castle and hiked along the Ridgeway to the White Horse car park where we were joined by the drivers whose cars were now safely at the overnight scout hut. The walk continued along the Ridgeway

past isolated sarsen stones and into the valley of stones where a whole dry valley was strewn tumbled full of sarsens, where we had lunch. From here the path turned east and we strolled down hill to Marlborough and the scout hut. After a full day of hiking, the pre-prepared supper by Mrs H was very welcome. Delicious.

The next day we drove to Avebury and had a guided walk around the Neolithic henge with its rings of standing stones and the stone lined Avenue out towards Silbury Hill, Europe's largest prehistoric mound. After a coffee break at the café we hiked up to the Neolithic causewayed enclosure on Windmill Hill where we took lunch. We had to walk in and out on the same path as the circular walk from the valley was flooded and it was a chill wind that blew across Windmill Hill as we lounged in the lee of a Bronze Age burial mound.

In May Will introduced us to new territory in the east, with his hike from Sherfield Park community centre to Sherborne St John, where local lad Jacob was invested in the presence of one of Worting's first scouts from the village, dad Matt (big brother to Suzie and first of a long line of notable Worting scouts from S St J, two of whom went on to run a scout troop there). Greg, Harry and Lidia's Dad, Ronnie, masterminded a cycle maintenance session in preparation for the troop's summer and autumn cycling programme.

A special weekend in London was built around a very kind offer for us to camp out on the roof terrace of a high rise office building, The Rowe in Whitechapel. Thirty scouts and leaders made our way on the plush, fast and very convenient coach to Victoria. Here we split up into small groups and walked across London, periodically meeting and then splitting up again, including packed lunch in a leafy park near Lincoln's Inn. We passed Buckingham Palace, through St James' Park to Horse Guards Parade, passing hundreds of years of history represented in the buildings and landmarks. We crossed Trafalgar Square and spent a little while in the National Gallery, then through to Covent Garden. Each small group was free to micro navigate and stop for refreshments or just to stand and stare. The Law Courts, Hatton Garden, Smithfield, Bart's, Paternoster Square, St Paul's, Mansion House, Bank of England, Leadenhall Market, Lloyds, the Gherkin, the Scalpel and the Monument all followed. Late in the afternoon we met up at The Sky Garden where we had secured a booking. The view from the top was spectacular across all of London and out even to the fringes in the very far distance (if your eyes were up to it). When back to street level we still had some ground to cover, one mile, and by the end of the day with six miles under our belts we were pleased to find our way to the Rowe and, once welcomed and shown our terrace home, to put our feet up. Tea was a pizza ordered in advance and picked up from Brick Lane by the younger leaders, who could be seen below us as they advanced with their haul. Although not as high as the Sky Garden the Rowe was still extraordinarily tall at 12 storeys, with vast views which slowly changed from evening in London to London lit up at night. Sleeping on that terrace with the world continuing to whizz past at high speed late into the night was a unique experience.

In the morning we set off, not before 'J' had cleaned all the sticky finger prints off the glass guards, and Hannah had stubbed her toe, back towards Victoria coach station, this time via the Tower, Tower Bridge, HMS Belfast, Hay's Galleria, the Golden Hinde, the Clink, the Globe and Tate Modern. After a look around the gallery (and a little mudlarking on the foreshore for a few) we had lunch on the Tate's lawn then set off along the embankment with all that offers (including ice cream in the park). Whitehall, Downing Street and the Cenotaph followed. Leaving Parliament Square we had time enough in hand to laze about in one corner of St James' Park

then, when the moment was right, we descended on the coach back to Basingstoke. Courtesy of the internal CCTV displayed above the driver we could see many of the scouts quickly dropped off to sleep. A once in a lifetime experience with many thanks to Mr Duffin and Frasers Property for setting it up for us.

The warmer weather allowed an evening of canoeing from Sheffield Lock to the M4 and back, with the incoming waters from the River Kennet making it hard going on the return trip upstream. This didn't come as a surprise to the canoe team who had, since March, been reccying various stretches of local rivers with the aim of providing 'moving water' opportunities for scouts and, in particular a location for the annual canoe camp. The campsite on the Cherwell was buried under 2ft of water and the river simply a torrent. Several visits to the Thames found it constantly on red or amber alert and made for some very rapid canoe trips, lots of fun but totally unsuitable for the inexperienced. As such, the planned river trip for those who had already undertaken plenty of practice on the Basingstoke Canal had to be shelved in favour of a day long paddle on the Kennet and Avon from Woolhampton to Sheffield Bottom Lock. Tame as this might have proved in normal conditions there was sufficient 'moving water' joining the canal from the River Kennet over this stretch to make for interesting manoeuvring.

In June Joel Lewis Grey, hero of so many Worting stories, did us proud by representing Britain in the World White Water Rafting Competition in Bosnia.

The Duck Race Gods again blessed us with good weather and the family fun atmosphere was joyfully absorbed. It is so much more than a fundraising event with the chance for the Worting family to gather, enjoy Barton Mill's excellent food and drink, watch the duck race and see the cubs and scouts splashing about in the icy stream collecting the competitors.

The cycling weekend provided another epic trip, this time from Hampton Court all the way home. Much of the route was on towpaths, which inevitably were shared with others enjoying the sun and the scenery so due caution was required. The first few miles were alongside the Thames, then a bit of a route jiggle at Weybridge in order to join the Wey Navigation. The artistic graffiti extravaganza on the support columns of the M25 proved quite an attraction before the team was off again, this time to the start of the Basingstoke Canal towpath. Cyclists were well ready for the overnight stop at Frimley Green and Mytchett Scout Hut but, after a token break, apparently they had sufficient energy left for frisbee, football and plenty of mucking about in the surrounding park. Having had enough of their male counterparts, Izzy and Hannah returned early and became self-appointed kitchen superstars, totally transforming the assorted jumble of pots and crocks into orderly, sequenced, logical ranks. Everybody was ready for an evening feast, less ready for overnight sleeping but still queued up most enthusiastically for an enormous breakfast that, for the first time in Worting scouting history, included piles of undeniably posh croissants. So back on the bikes, this time all the way to the familiar territory of the Canoe Clubhouse at Colt Hill, with sadly one 'off' at a point where the canal had nibbled into the path and the warning yell from the previous scout came too late. Bike and body back in functioning order it was time for Stanley's Dad and Ethan's Mum to join the ranks. After Greywell the route was substantially on road and involved rather more hills than the towpath cyclists had met previously, so the extra adult support was most welcome. Yelled warnings regarding every vehicle that dared approach were communicated with gusto. Thence to the Ice Cream Kiosk in Eastrop Park for well-earned rewards before the final trek to the Leisure Park. 50 miles complete, 16 hardy heroes.

Thursday evenings were a fine blend of all sorts of fun, outdoors as much as possible. Greg's cycle ride ended up at the Memorial Park BMX track to general approval. Alongside navigation expertise, Tim demonstrated the virtues of packing only essentials in expedition rucksacks. Jack and Greg organised an evening of wide games at Middle Copse supported by sausages and hot chocolate and as the sun hung on into the evening it was a quintessential scouting experience.

Family Camp, once again organised by the indefatigable Sam Stevens, was very well attended, the highest number ever, with the unintended consequence that our use of water outstripped the rate at which the site could refill and so we experienced some dry moments. None the less we had great fun, with Saturday filled with activities, good food and a campfire with AGM and sing-song on Saturday night. At the AGM Neil Macintosh stepped down as GSL and anointed Ben Mills as his successor. Ben was welcomed and Neil was greatly thanked, although we have his assurance that he will remain active, not least as treasurer. He was presented with a set of cards drawn by 'J' each showing a memorable moment as recalled by his fellow leaders. Aaron and Joel, the Lewis Grey (or Life's Good) twins, ran the sing-song, ably assisted by Jack with some of his American camp fire skits. On Sunday we had a garden party themed games morning and with much regret packed up in the afternoon.

Jack and 'J' led the scouts on a local history walk in July, starting at the churchyard where history is carved on the grave stones, then up the ancient Church Lane, possibly there since the Romans. At the top of the hill Winklebury hill fort was pointed out as were other archaeological sites, then walking back along the field edge small flint tools and fossils were picked up and handed around.

The oldest scouts put the younger ones through their paces during their evening that included plenty of new games and even tips on managing power-point presentations. Stu had patrols fine-tuning their teamwork skills on a problem solving evening at Cowdery Down – there was a bog to be crossed, isotopes to be rescued, a wounded soldier needing aid having fallen out of a tree – and all that sort of stuff.

It has become traditional for the oldest scouts to share a final treat, spending a weekend navigating a narrow-boat along the Grand Union Canal from Harefield towards central London. This year Tyler's dad, Les, and Colin provided the driving support team alongside Gav. Always a leisurely weekend towards the end of the final few weeks at school, this one is definitely a 'potter', nothing too rigorous, simply ensuring that everybody is well nourished, that there's plenty of banter and that the locks are all opened and closed in the correct sequence. The usual choice of route was off limits on this occasion, a cruiser having sunk in the middle of the Paddington Arm thus stopping shipping movements! Unperturbed, the crew took their customary evening stroll but to Syon Park rather than Hyde Park as had been scheduled. The presence of a trio of young ladies meant that galley chores were endlessly and enthusiastically accompanied by 'music of the moment' – requiring Colin to take refuge on the towpath if all space on the steerer's deck was occupied.

As has been indicated previously, accessing reasonably flowing stretches of water in 2024 proved a nightmare, so arrangements for canoe camp were confirmed rather belatedly. A stretch of the middle Thames was selected, starting south of Oxford at Clifton Hampden, camping riverside in Wallingford and finishing at Pangbourne. It was a pleasure to have Laura (a

member of the famed Norwegian Gold DoE canoeing team 2018) and Harry (Ziggy) join the leader team. The canoes were heavy laden with all the requisite camping and personal kit so this was very much an expedition rather than just a pleasant paddle downstream. However, it was indeed pleasant and most rewarding to have a fresh group of Wortingtonites introduced to the joys of canoe camping.

The summer term ended with the traditional canoe and paddle fun at Colt Hill, with sausages sizzling on a barbeque, enough for the scouts, leaders siblings and parents (and I suspect Bruno - Will and Suzie's handsome hound - but he was very quick and very discreet and, he assured us, only tidied up those sausages that had failed the 5 second rule)

August and the summer holiday is also time for Summer Camp. On Saturday the main body gathered together for the long trip up to North Wales although some elements had gone ahead. The final approach to the camp which was just south of Conwy was up a narrow lane and everyone had to breath in hard to squeeze the minibuses up there. Having taken in the quaint camp and stunning views across the valley, setting up camp and making our home for the week took up the afternoon. Mrs Lewis Grey, mother of the LG twins and likely generic source of their boundless energy, stood in for Greg who had been called away, and was busy setting up the kitchen and planning menus. She had brought a vast pre-prepared bolognaise, which we had with garlic bread. The next night it was supported by kidney beans, flat bread and salad and the third night the residue much adulated by a vast input of beans, was re-labelled 'cowboy stew' and made its final appearance supported by baked potatoes. Genius, and delicious.

We were set up unusually quickly and could take stock of our surroundings. The camp was on three levels. An upper terrace with a hut, toilet and kitchen, as well as a shower that had no hot water. There was no electricity on site at all. On this level the shelters were erected which soon proved to be the best place to eat meals. Below this was the access with the cars, trailers and minibuses. Then was a long narrow terrace on which leaders tents and the mess tent was set up. Below this was a wide shallow sloping meadow in which were camped the scouts and the young leaders. To the edge of the site was a small stream that in part ran through the site allowing for incipient hydrological engineers to test their theories of water management. Behind the site was a wood full of trails.

On Sunday the weather forecast dictated that this was the better day for the mountain hike up Y Garn led by Gav and Tim. Driving to the visitors centre at the base the group proceeded in 4 teams, two going clockwise with Gav in the second team and two going anti clockwise with Tim in the second team. The clockwise route took us up the Devils Kitchen, quite a puff to get to the top. From here we looped uphill to the top of Y Garn, which at 947 metres was blanketed with low cloud and buffeted by squally winds. Then over the edge where the path was barely visible until you were on it that followed a narrow arête down to the lake. It was a challenge in so many ways, but as a result everyone felt exhilarated and that they had achieved something extraordinary. 'J' lost his hat at the top, which blew off and didn't land or bounce but just sailed away into the mist. Tyler on the other hand managed to hold on to his hat despite the propeller on top spinning like a 747 turbine on take-off. Dan had forgotten to bring a coat on camp, which was a necessity for the hike, luckily spares abounded, but he was not allowed to forget his faux pas.

On Monday we all went into Conwy, split up into teams and played Conwy-opoly. The more destinations your team was photographed at the more points were scored (and the greater distance travelled). Some like 'J' concentrated on seeing the town walls, the castle and the chip shop, but others like Tim's team hiked for miles collecting even the remotest points and racking up a huge score. At the end of the day we all met up at the beach and enjoyed a cooling splash in the waves, somewhat spoilt by a number being stung by jelly fish and poor Jack in particular finding the sting very aggravating into the evening.

On Tuesday we stayed on camp and made our own fun, including whittling, making fires, dreaming up games and generally recovered from our exertions. The LG twins managed to get the hot water shower that Greg had bought for the camp but was not there to set up, working and thereafter carefully curated shower sessions were possible to replace the vats of heated water from the stove top prepared by Chrissie and handed out for stand up rinsing in the otherwise cold shower cubicle. This was not needed straight away as we all went in to Llandudno for a swimming session and a hot shower. Everyone had a great time in the pool but a rivalry with a local lad armed with a water pistol varied in the degree of 'good natured-ness' displayed. After a lunch of campfire snacks and an afternoon of exercise, proper food was now the necessity. But the leaders were on strike. Time for the scouts to do their own shopping, plan and cook their own evening meal – on a budget. There was a strict requirement to provide plenty of protein, to include veg and fruit – and NO strawberry laces, fizzy cherries and fruit salad did not qualify. Sentries were posted at the self-serve tills to return those in contravention of the rules to the shelves with their banned booty. The cooking part was protracted, entertaining for the spectating leaders and, for the most part, amazingly successful.

Wednesday was the trip to Bounce Below, a trampolining centre set in the old slate caverns of Blaenau Ffestiniog. Vast trampolines and multi layered networks all lit with bright colourful lights were an instant draw for the scouts. Many of the leaders such as Colin, Jack, Will, the LG twins and Stuart joined them whilst some of the 'classics' smiled benignly at such fun then slunk away to the coffee shop. However in time poor Claire jarred her knee and had to be rescued and taken to the local minor injuries clinic where it was assessed that she need to take the rest of the week easy and became more of an observer than a participant.

Thursday was a trip to the Slate Museum in the morning which was beset by rain and the planned lunch by the lake became lunch in a damp minibus, but it is all character forming. In the afternoon we went to Betws-y-Coed where shops hawking tripper trash were descended on like they were bazaars of great treasure by the scouts, whilst leaders tended to enjoying the river side and the park as the day improved.

Friday was the day of the mystery hike, where groups (with a leader) were taken to a mystery destination and had to navigate back. They were out all day and enjoyed the challenge. Those leaders back at camp packed away as much of the kit as possible to make Saturday's departure as quick as possible as the journey was long.

Saturday morning found us packed up and ready to go very quickly, after a simple breakfast. We were all very grateful to Mr and Mrs Perman who drove all the way up to tow back one of the trailers, which had been delivered by Dave Wheeler but the return journey had relied on Greg who in the end had unavoidably not been able to join us, and we missed him very much. And so we wended our weary way back to Basingstoke.

D J Merryweather deservedly won the Nash Award and Tyler Fulbrook was the best scout on camp. At the end of Summer Camp we said goodbye to DJ, Tyler, Lidia, Ben, Emily and Henry all of whom had finished the scout stage of their scouting journey. All were big characters leaving a hole and will be missed, but some we hope will come back as young leaders in time.

Will was a stalwart of the camp, but did not have Suzie with him as she was too heavily pregnant, and it was with great delight that we learnt that they were blessed with a son, Archie, no doubt a future Worting Scout.

The first night back for autumn term in September was a forum to discuss the programme, welcome new scouts and renew friendships. We also had a chance to practice putting up and taking down some new tents acquired by Gav and Chrissie after the Reading Festival, when all sorts of abandoned kit is available for charitable use. Some of this was kept for our use, some sold to raise money for ShelterBox and some donated as practical comforts to the homeless charity Camrose.

On the first night out whilst the days were still long we took an evening stroll as the sun went down, enjoying the sunset, the bats flitting and the owls calling. Unfortunately towards the end when it was dark we missed our stile on the far side of a dark field and found ourselves at the wrong end of the paddock confronted by an angry landowner who did not allow for a minor honest navigation error and was very rude to 'J', going so far as to assert that the good folk of Basingstoke should stay in Basingstoke after dark, and never dare to aspire to see the stars or the bats or hear the owls, or feel the cool evening breeze through their hair.

Tim organised a navigation and clues hunt around Sherfield on Loddon, preparing himself and the scouts for the sort of skills needed to undertake the forthcoming Cyclorama. The evening was most noted for the large orange moon that slowly rose and was truly spectacular, a sight you would miss staying at home and watching telly if the Tangier landowner had his way. Jack and J organised the preliminary cooking event of each autumn term, Ready Steady Cook, but this year instead of the usual rule that each team got the same ingredient, the yellow sticker approach to purchase dictated that each team chose different ingredients from a wide range available and made what they could of what they had chosen. Best in show was a delicious carbonara.

The final canoe trip of the season was enjoyed by those who had trained earlier in the year, this time testing their skills on the Woolhampton to Theale stretch of the Kennet and Avon. There was a notable rescue, not however of a canoeist but of a bike thrown into the canal by a couple of youths as the team approached. It would have blocked the lock gates if left so just as well that Mr Colin's rescue skills were on form. The 'trophy' had of course to be brought back to the hut for all to admire – the most recent in a long line of 'rescued' kit which, over the years, has included a multi-coloured Buddha, an 6 foot wooden tulip and an 8 foot dinghy with several holes.

In October the District cyclorama was organised by Tim and Gav, supported by Worting leaders, young leaders and parents. The navigation and clue based search started and finished at Stratton Park scout hut, but the teams were only ever a short distance from the static and cycling marshals who the troop supplied. Worting entered 4 teams, with our novice scouts accompanied by parents taking first, second and third places! Our unaccompanied team did well

but disappeared for a while and unfortunately, after the fact, it was discovered that Stanley had fallen off his bike and hurt himself, but had been sorted out by Ethan and then stuck to the ride like a legend.

Colin's mystery hike was a brand new take on hiking and navigating around town. Using the town's history and quirky features the scouts followed clues and maps to different locations where they gathered facts, names and numbers which when put together told the tale of a (fictional) murder that they had just solved. We look forward to more of these in the future. In preparation for the hut weekend Neven gave a very smooth, informative and entertaining talk about amateur radio, supported by his Grandad who covered the more serious side of licences and 'on air' behaviour.

The scouts had a novel and very pleasant evening at All Saints Church looked after by their captain of Bells, Adam Greenley. They were divided into two groups. Whilst one group went up into the tower to have a go at bell ringing, enjoying a bit too much the way the returning rope launched the smaller ones off their feet, the other group prepared a small hand bell recital for their return. Having heard the two groups' hand-bell rendition the captain was asked to judge which was best. He offered comparisons which allowed both teams a different set of laurels. But this did not satisfy the honour of the scouts who insisted one team should be crowned the winner. It was the team that attempted 'tubular bells' under the direction of Seb. The evening was set up by Ethan and was great success. Thank you Ethan.

The October hut weekend pivoted around the Jamboree on the Airways (JOTA). Basingstoke Amateur Radio Club set up an aerial, a receiver and a transmitter and in turns the scouts were able to chat with scouts across Europe and Britain who were taking part. They spoke to scouts in Holland, Germany and France. The BARC team then joined us for supper, a delicious chicken pie for 30 made by Jack. Gav, Colin and Will did woodworking throughout the weekend, making display Xmas trees for the garden planters and shelves for the attic, and the evening was as always set aside for games and larks. Thank you Mr Duffin once again for your overnight support, and also to Neven's grandad Chris and his friends at BARC.

Close to November 5th Jack and Greg organised a bonfire at Middle Copse, the warm and orange glow of the heap of embers was the focus of the evening, with wide games of many kinds in the shadowy woods beyond. Marshmallows and chocolate digestives allowed everyone to make s'mores and left-over Halloween sweets provided an end of evening treat. But the best thing about the evening was that Will and Suzie brought young Archie up for his first camp fire and the older leaders took it in turns to sit by the fire and cuddle the tiny sleeping chap.

As always, there was a good and smart turnout for Remembrance Sunday at the church and the war memorial was flanked by Scouts, Cubs, Beavers and Squirrels when the minute's silence took place. Never forgotten.

In the weeks and weekend leading up to the cooking competition, to decide who would go forward to the district competition, WhatsApp was alive with messages between teams organising menus, recipes, allergens to avoid, receipts and costings. On the night Greg oversaw the competition, all strict, fair and above board to the same rules as used at district, judged against the same criteria, to include not only the cooking, but hygiene, costs and table decoration. All the teams produced very creditable meals and (another) delicious carbonara (did

they learn some secret recipe at Ready Steady Cook?). The winners, who will hopefully go on to represent us at the District competition, were the girls, Anoushka, Megan, Izzy and Hannah. Fortunately the weekend of the County PL/APL course at Lyons Copse was graced by rather warmer weather than in the previous year and camping, albeit with multiple layers and extra blankets, was a manageable experience for the hardy oldest scouts. It's an intense course, with lots of information imparted, but the benefits of sharing experiences with a range of others, undertaking new challenges and working out how best to manage leadership responsibilities extend way beyond scouting years.

Arthur as part of his leadership challenge organised a taster evening at the Loddon Indoor Bowls Club, who gave us a very kindly welcome. It was well attended and the club explained the aim of the game and the rules, showed the scouts how to bowl and played several games. The bar kept them topped up with J2Os and at the end the club handed out chocolate prizes. Many thanks to them for an enjoyable evening, and many thanks to Arthur for pulling it all together.

Tim led a hike from Oakley to Beggarwood, via Puzzle Corner, Fuzzy Drove, Sainsburys, Hatch Warren and Beggarwood Park. On a cold and frosty night; spirits were lifted with hot, salty, vinegary chips awaiting us at the end. Thank you Chrissie.

In the December run up towards Christmas Craft night was the usual mix of pottery painting to create festive gifts for parents and loved ones, and making Christmas cards, but this year was joined by a new craft. Origami Christmas decoration stars were made for Mrs Duffin to take to St Michael's Hospice.

On a cold and blustery day, that at one point looked like it might need to be cancelled due to a yellow weather warning, the Scouts and parents gathered at Lamb's Field, a Site for Importance of Nature Conservation at the end of Church Lane in Worting. It is a veritable wildlife haven, but needs work to keep it fit for nature and so the Scouts set about 'scrub bashing', just containing the spread of scrub so that it does not over power and shade out the flower meadow. The Basingstoke Conservation Volunteers were hedge laying and so giving us a chance to see them at work and also for them to talk to us about this ancient countryside practice.

The traditional Christmas party was greatly enjoyed by those who participated, starting with games, moving on to sit down party food, and then post prandial charades which was very popular. The leaders acted as servants for the night, delivering food around the table and then came the unusual sight of the scouts sitting chatting, laughing and gesticulating but without making any mischief and without mishap. It was like a page out of a Dickens novel.

The last troop night of the year was a silent disco organised by Hatch Warren leaders, at Middle Copse. A fire gave the whole a cosy glow whilst the surrounding woodland was lit like a fairly wonderland. To one side a small kitchen produced burgers, hot chocolate and popcorn, whilst a slide show threw up pictures of the year's highlights for each troop present on a loop. Each scout and leader were issued with headphones on which channels allowed a selection of music. Having anticipated that the scouts would sway, vibe and throw shapes each in their own little world, most seemed to wear their headphones around their necks and enjoy inter troop conviviality, chatting in groups, greeting old friends, recognising people from their schools. A proper Christmas get together which they all seemed to enjoy very much and which brought our scouting year to a very satisfactory warm and fuzzy conclusion.

