

6th CHRISTCHURCH (BRANGSORE)

Yet again we can look back on an active fun-packed year for all sections. We enjoyed a settled leadership team although for a second year the GSL position remained vacant. Each of these leaders play their part in offering opportunities for the young people to develop as they move through the sections and we saw the fruits of this work when George Whittingham was awarded Mayor's Scout. Quite a trip from starting in beavers. Also eight of our scouts achieved the Chief Scout Gold award, five of whom had started in beavers 7 years ago. What a team effort.

The team effort starts in Beavers and last year put more emphasis on games, noisy lively ones preferably, as the Beavers said this is what they enjoy most. The leaders put together a programme that the boys thought fun whilst gaining badges and learning skills such as working in a team and the advantages of listening carefully. To date, there has been no request for ear plugs! There was a focus on the Beaver Scout promise and one highlight was a visit from an adult in a wheelchair. A hilarious evening ensued when the empathy of the Beavers and their resourcefulness led to adaptations to a game that needed speed. They decided to give themselves handicaps too and the amazing variety of ideas they came up with led to lots of laughter and fun for all.

Ask what the following have in common; rock climbing, surfing, collecting teddies and studying dinosaurs. Meet the Brangore colony of beavers and these were their hobbies which they each presented at a meeting. Not all adults would be comfortable doing this and the beavers were rewarded with hobby badges. The colony also got out and about. They visited Brownsea Island in the autumn, and yes it rained, but they saw Baden-Powell's camp and many red squirrels and enjoyed a treasure hunt. Christmas saw a visit to the panto and they did the district hike.

Those Beavers that had swum up to Cubs enjoyed an action-packed programme, at HQ and out and about. At HQ they completed their Global, Promise and Fitness Challenges which involved lots of activities and badge work. Many also gained their athletics badges at the district event. As part of this work, several people with different skills visited the pack, and a highlight was a police man with his police dog Lacey. The Cubs also enjoyed several outings which included playing skittles, learning archery skills at Braggers Wood, a boat trip and Christchurch Fire Station. Cubs enjoy testing their skills and competed enthusiastically in District events including Sports Day, the Scrapstore Challenge and 5-a-side football.

The highlight for many cubs moving up is the opportunity to start camping. Two fun camps were held, the May one with a circus theme and the summer one with an Olympic theme. Difficult weather conditions in May didn't deter the boys from enjoying a great adventure. Not quite a camp, the elder cubs also went to Little Canada Activity Centre on the Isle of Wight where they tried climbing, abseiling, trampolining, giant swing, zip wire, aeroball and tunneling. Most of these boys had started in Beavers 4 years previously.

The Scout troop started the year very large and ended the year large. There were several new scouts who had not come up through the sections partly because we couldn't get them off the waiting lists in beavers and cubs. Last May was wet and windy and a difficult but memorable District camp took place, ending in a collapsed tent and much mud. The parents who helped break camp might remember this but the scouts will remember the activities such as bridge building. Many challenging activities were tried by the scouts when they visited Little Canada activity centre on the Isle of Wight.

Better weather at the Emlyn Trophy saw two Bransgore teams entered. This trophy is elusive to Bransgore as we have yet to win it in 87 years and a recount of the results gave us a second place. District Sports Day gave the troop an interesting lesson in quality not quantity. The smallest ever recent Bransgore troop entry won the Shield, the Troop Relay, the Spreadbury Cup and contributed to the Group relay win. The summer continued with many activities out in the forest such as orienteering, cycling and wide games, and ended with a BBQ on the beach.

The autumn saw an exciting penalty shoot out in the five-a-side football, with a young Bransgore team that seemed very short at times, giving us the runners-up place. The New Year saw the troop win the District cooking competition and then come second at the county level. This competition tests team work as much as cooking skills and most of the team had been working together within scouting for many years. The team work continued when the troop team won the Letchford trophy for first aid.

As a group, we paraded and attended at both Remembrance Sunday in Bransgore and St George's Day in Christchurch. We have organized more parent involvement with scout meetings to ensure enough hands and enable parents to see more of what scouting is offering their children. We became District Duty Troop as the year ended and are looking forward to celebrating 50 continuous years of Scouting in Bransgore next year. This is a remarkable 50 year long team effort of fighting for a permanent headquarters, managing through leader crises and turning up again and again to offer what we are all passionate about; scouting.



The year has ended with a strong team delivering great scouting and our many thanks go to each and every leader, committee member and parent supporter. We look forward to next year with a new GSL currently going through appointment and the team and the fun getting better and better.

Jackie Dawson
On behalf of the Leadership Team