

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the 7th Epsom Newsletter.

As we progress into the winter months we are not only getting ready for another year of Community Christmas Post but are also starting more detailed planning for the activities we will undertake in our Centenary Year, 2027. A Committee has been formed and will have its second meeting during November. If you would like to get involved, we are looking for a volunteer to help coordinate a Design A Badge competition starting early next year so it can be approved and manufactured ready for 2027. Please let your Section Leader know if you would like to help.

Read on to find out more about what the Group has been doing since the start of the summer.

The Executive Team

Community Christmas Post

It may seem a bit early to be thinking of Christmas Cards, but the team that organises our Community Christmas Post is full steam ahead planning for this year. Boxes will go out on 24th November, and we need to identify

- Sorters (Monday 8 December to Friday 12 December)
- Post persons to collect post 12-14 December for delivery during the ten days

Steve Barden is organising post persons, and all parents have been/will be emailed requesting help. Please respond so Steve doesn't need to spend too much time chasing.

Kevin Mead is organising sorters and would be delighted to hear from anyone who is able to provide a few hours help during the day during sorting week (Monday, Thursday, Friday).

This is an important event in our Fundraising calendar which last year raised nearly £2000 for 7th Epsom Funds ; please do what you can to support it as well as using the post for any cards you send in the local area.

2025 -2026 Diary Dates

- 24th November - Community Christmas Post Boxes deployed around the Borough (see website for details)
- 7th March 2026 - Quiz & Social
- 22nd May - 25th May 2026 - Spring Camp
- 25th July-1st August 2026 - Summer Camp

Annual Review and AGM

As a charity 7th Epsom is required to have an Annual General Meeting as defined in our Constitution. (This is also known as the Annual Review by the Group Scout Council). We typically amalgamate this with a brief review of the year so the assembled masses can hear about what had been the highlights of our 2024-25 Scouting Year.

Held on October 8th, The Group Scout Council consisted of more than 20 of our Leaders, Assistants, parents and supporters and included John Hughes who was representing Karl Nicholas, Epsom and Ewell District Lead Volunteer.

Kevin Mead, Chair, welcomed everyone and summarised the purpose and structure of the meeting before explaining that 7th Epsom had a very successful year which started with a family day at Boidier Hurst attended by some 50 families and despite indifferent weather, had a fun time. In addition, our eight weekly Section Meetings, four camps and a number of other activities, meant our hardworking volunteer Leaders were justly praised and appreciated. Along with the many parents who provided support each week they ensure the varied and engaging programmes of activities help our young people grow their skills and confidence for today's world. He finished his summary by congratulating the successful Cubs who were victorious in the District Quiz and presenting the winner's trophy to Apache Leader Leigh Hogarty.

Our Treasurer, Simon Williams summarised the Group's financial position as remaining in good health, with a small surplus being accrued for the year.

The meeting then addressed the formalities of confirming and voting for candidates of the Group's key posts for the coming year.

Finally, John Hughes was able to present Eileen Perren with her Wood Badge with a few words of thanks for her steadfast work with Clearwater Beavers .

Steve Barden



Scout Commendation Award

Daniel Booker from Explorers receives Scout Commendation Award

I was honoured to receive the Scouts Commendation Award "for exceptional service to the Crown in the best traditions of the Scout movement" from Deputy Lieutenant Martin Gerrard at a recent unit meeting. This recognition reflects not only my personal journey through Scouting but also the spirit of teamwork, service, and leadership that lies at the heart of our movement.

The award was presented to me in recognition of my work as a Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet for Surrey, a role that allowed me to represent both the Crown and the Scout movement at civic events, ceremonies, and community engagements across the county. Serving in this position has been a truly unique experience — one that deepened my appreciation of public service and the importance of giving back to the community.

Throughout my time as a Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet, I have had the privilege of meeting people from all walks of life who are committed to making a positive difference. From supporting local events to representing young people at official engagements, every opportunity has strengthened my sense of responsibility and pride in Scouting's values. One of the highlights of this journey was speaking about my role at the Surrey Scouts Young Leader Conference, where I shared my experiences and insights with other young leaders. It was rewarding to show how Scouting can open doors to remarkable opportunities and to encourage others to embrace leadership roles that challenge and inspire them.

I am incredibly grateful to the leaders, mentors, and fellow Scouts who have supported me along the way. Receiving this award reminded me how much Scouting shapes who we become — not only through badges and adventures, but through the lessons of service, citizenship, and kindness that stay with us for life.



Summer Camp 2025

Memories from Scout Summer Camp 2025 at Bushy Wood near Eastbourne.

We'll all remember the fun we had, the good food and good times; some will remember their personal achievements - they did what they didn't think they could! That's what makes being a Leader so rewarding.

We'll all remember the epic rain... and some will remember why it helps to wear your waterproof trousers in the rain, not just carry them in your rucksack. Some will remember the ride up the cliff at Hastings and we'll all remember Kathy's beaming face outside Foyle's house; some will remember walking around the White Horse at Willingdon and some will remember swimming at Eastbourne.

The leaders will remember the great showers (bluetooth your own music if you know how!). And a few will remember the hot chocolate, Kit Kats and game of two truths and a lie at 2.30am in the marquee having been washed out of their own tent.

Next year, Broadstone Warren in Ashdown Forest, be there!

Clare Knight - Scout Team



Why I volunteer - Clare Knight

The Scout Group is always looking for volunteers so I thought I'd say a little about why I do it. I started when my boys were in Scouts and Cubs, I dropped them off at camp and remembered the great time I'd had when I was a Scout/Guide, so I popped along to Scouts and started as an occasional helper. Since then I have climbed, pot-holed, canoed, knotted, learnt loads and had a great time! I've helped with jumble sales, book sales and delivering Christmas post. I've been to Sweden, Uganda, Kenya and Madagascar. I spent my 50th birthday in my home country of Kenya on a minibus with a load of Explorers for 24hrs eating jam sandwiches. I've camped in rain, snow and sun. I've sometimes been blown away up mountains by the wind. I've always been blown away by the exhilaration of seeing youngsters grow in confidence and skills, prepared to have a go and try. I've made great friends and always have a laugh. I've had opportunities I never would have had. Because of Scouts, I've done other things I would not have been brave enough to do. I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

So go on, give it a go, there are lots of opportunities and you don't have to camp if that's not your thing. Talk to one of the leaders and see where your journey takes you.

Water Weekend 2025

Our annual Water Weekend took place at the start of September. 50 Scouts and Explorers camped for the weekend in the Bell Tent village at Thames Young Mariners (TYM) near Richmond and on Saturday we were joined by 30 Cubs.

Despite a dodgy weather forecast we managed to largely avoid the showers during the activity sessions on Saturday, the rain kindly coming when we were having breaks – although we had to finish the final session a little early due to warning of thunder and lightning on the river. The Scouts enjoyed a mix of kayaking, open canoeing, stand-up paddleboarding and sailing (with good wind for a change) whilst the Cubs did canoeing, kayaking and undertook a land-based challenge course. This was all made possible by a large team of adults providing catering, transport, canoe instruction, campsite organisation, etc.

The Scouts and Explorers enjoyed a filling meal on Saturday evening, followed by the usual film show in the hall at TYM. After a really busy day the camp was all quiet at lights out – a marked contrast to the excited chatter late into the night on Friday!

Sunday morning was a mix of kayak and open canoes for the scouts, whilst the Explorer Scouts did a river trip up the Thames. We managed to avoid the dark clouds nearby and had a largely sunny day for the activities. Following an afternoon raft-making session, where most of the rafts managed to stay afloat, we finished packing up and the contingent were loaded into minibuses and cars for the journey back to Epsom just as the rain started. It was agreed that a brilliant time had been had by all and plans are already being made for September 2026.

Tony Marshall - Scout Team



BEAVERS

The Beavers had a busy summer term, making the most of the lovely weather outdoors. In the first half of term we learnt about VE Day as part of the 80th anniversary celebrations. VE Day marked the end of World War Two in Europe, when Winston Churchill, declared a national holiday that led to a day of partying and celebrating. We also worked over several evenings on the Disability Awareness Badge, learning about other people's needs, including paying a visit to Epsom Riding for the Disabled Association site. We met the horses and were shown round the site, finding out about the work they do there to provide opportunities for disabled people to improve their health and well-being through the therapeutic powers of horses. After half term we worked on the Health and Fitness Badge, playing games and learning about healthy bodies and healthy food, including making fruit kebabs.

Outdoor activities this term included a gorgeous summer evening on Epsom Downs at the Woodland Trust memorial wood near Langley Vale, exploring the site with a mindfulness hike and making the most of the children's play area. We also developed our skills on wheels with a meeting in Rosebery Park working on the Cyclist Badge. We were then up at Headley Heath hiking across the site past the cattle to find a stretch of woodland with lots of branches for practising den building. Term finished with a picnic and games in Rosebery Park. All of these activities contribute towards the My Adventure and My Outdoors activity badges.

Many of the Beavers attended the spring bank camp, arriving Friday afternoon to stay overnight, then being collected exhausted on Saturday afternoon. For many this was their very first sleepover! Activities were based around the Navigator Badge, with Beavers learning map reading skills and exploring the site. They also took part in a photo challenge, tried out grass sledging and had a go at a blind fold trail, as well as joining in games with the Cubs, Scouts and Explorers.

This autumn term we will be going out when we can on town trails and hikes, while also spending more time indoors to avoid the dark and the damp autumn weather. We will be working on the Emergency Aid Stage 1 Badge, Space Badge and creative badges, as well as components of the My Adventure and My World activity badges, before finishing term with a Christmas party!

Many thanks as always to our many parent helpers who make all these activities possible.

Kathy, Eileen, Alex and Victoria.



cubs

Following a brilliant Spring Camp we headed towards the Summer break with a programme making the most of the bright, warm evenings. Cubs worked really hard to achieve their Athletics & Athletic Plus Badges, recording times for a 1km run, relay races, distance events & team games. It was great to see and hear all the Cubs cheering each other on!

Next up to Headley Heath for our Den building night. Cubs had to build shelters that would survive a tropical storm (more commonly known as their leaders running around with water pistols!). There were some great efforts, all very different in shape and size and we even had some dryish Cubs at the end of the night.



Water Olympics next, one we haven't done for a few years.

Cubs took part in various team and individual events in Rosebery Park and of course there was a water fight at the end, I mean why wouldn't we!!!!



Another badge that the Cubs achieved for the first time was the Cyclist Activity Badge. Cubs learnt basic bike maintenance, cycling safety and then went for a ride around the park. We are lucky to be a well equipped Group at 7th Epsom and with the support of two of our Scout Leaders, Kevin & Tony, the Cubs got to make great use of our climbing wall and equipment. So proud to see every Cub give it a go, each getting a little higher each climb despite some nerves, but all having a brilliant time.



After our final meeting we hit the summer break and a well-earned rest.

cubs

We came back after the break with a bang, determined to fill those sleeves with more badges but not until we took advantage of the last few lighter nights. Wide games up on Epsom Downs, including the world's biggest game of searchlight and the firm favourite that is the Chip Shop challenge, where we use what 3 words to navigate our way to some of Epsom's fine chip selling establishments, filled our first 2 weeks.

Week 3 saw the Cubs achieving their Stage 1&2 Emergency Aid Badges, learning basic first aid, how to support people if they come across various incidents, how to contact the different emergency services, including the type of information that's important and how to know which emergency service to call first when a number maybe needed.

Up to Boidier Hurst next for our annual fire lighting challenge. Cubs were taught different ways to light a fire and once they had practiced these they had to do a time challenge to see who could melt their giant marshmallow the quickest using only a tripod. Smores to follow, as is standard practice!!



Cubs from all three packs joined in on the District Night Hike, which saw different groups dropped off at various points with the aim to get to Boidier Hurst for hot dogs and a campfire sing song. 7th Epsom did really well and despite a bit of nervousness managed to do most of the route without the need for their torches.

The following week saw the Cubs tackle another new badge, Space, where they learnt about what its like to be an Astronaut, the type of skills that they need, the solar system and the different bodies within it and also used satellites to search the Earth for different features, including the mini buses at the HQ!

The first part of the Navigation & Road Safety Badges finished off a very busy half term, with so much more to achieve in the run up to Christmas

Leigh Hogarty - Apache Cub Leader

SCOUTS

The clocks have just gone back, and I am writing a report on our summer term, which seems a long time ago now. We spent the beginning of the summer term preparing the Scouts for the camping season with some preparation evenings at Boidier Hurst getting ready to have the skills needed at our Spring Camp in May, lighting fires, putting up tents, using saw and axe etc. We followed this up with doing the final elements of our Outdoor Challenge Badge, which most Scouts have now completed.

In addition to our focus on camping, we spent an evening completing the first stage of our Athletics Badge and an evening working towards a new badge called MoneySense, which we will complete next year. Our last two meetings for the summer included a hike across The Downs, in two different directions then games and a barbecue at Horton Country Park.

Spring Camp 2025

The 7th Epsom Group camp saw over 100 youngsters going to Frylands Scout Camp site just outside Selhurst. The Scout Section had 39 Scouts attending, which was everybody bar about three Scouts. The Scouts took part in air rifle shooting, climbing, assault course, pioneering, our usual Sunday hike, plus organised team building activities. In addition to all that all the Scouts had to prepare fires, and cook and prepare their own meals. Somebody decided it would be a good idea to get the Scouts make their own naan bread, which from the picture you will see culminated in quite a mess.

In addition to our own Scout Section activities, we also participated with the rest of the 7th Epsom Sections in Group games, organised by the Explorers, and a Group campfire, plus a wide game with the Explorers. The weather was kind to us, so a good time was had by all.

Gillian Mead – Scout Leader



EXPLORERS

Herewith a summary from our Explorers of the activities they have taken part in.

What3words Hike

Our recent what3words hike was a fun and modern twist on the orienteering we're all used to! The what3words app has the world divided into 3x3 metre squares which are each assigned a unique three-word code. We were given a list of these codes, each worth a different amount of points. The ones worth more points were also further away from our starting location at EMC. To bank these points, we had to walk to the location the code corresponded to using the what3words app and take a selfie of ourselves doing a specific pose that was given for us to do next to each code. We then had to return to EMC. Our team decided to go for the furthest locations with the most reward which we hoped would minimise the time spent taking photos or showing them to the leaders, rather than walking to the next location. This strategy paid off and I found it to be more fun as well, taking us a bit further afield to explore different parts of Epsom which was interesting to see at night. I certainly learnt a few things about the town I call home and found it really enjoyable, the only question left is...where to try this evening next?

Newspaper Fashion Show (Rosie)

The evening usually started with everyone dividing into small teams. Each group planned and creates an outfits within a set time limit, often around half an hour. It was a fun challenge to turn fragile sheets of newspaper into something stylish or funny, which always lead to lots of laughter and teamwork. Once the outfits were ready, it was time for the fashion show. We took turns walking the “runway” and narrating each other. Newspaper fashion night was not just about dressing up—it was 's about being imaginative, having fun, and enjoying time together and having plenty of laughs and great memories.

Explorers' Water Weekend – September 2025 (Edward)

Persistent rain couldn't dampen the enthusiasm of our Explorers during their Water Weekend in September. Spirits remained high throughout a packed programme of activities on both river and lake. The group began with a peaceful canoe trip along the river, enjoying the rhythmic splash of paddles and the quiet moments of conversation with friends; a welcome chance to slow down and connect.

Out on the lake, however, things got a little livelier. Sailing sessions brought plenty of laughter and teamwork, as Explorers learned to handle the changing wind (and occasional downpour!) with good humour.

The highlight for many was the raft-building challenge. Several inventive designs took to the water; though only one team completed a full circuit of the lake without sinking or getting soaked. The rest of the flotilla met a rather wetter fate, but all in excellent spirits.

Despite the rain, the weekend was full of energy, camaraderie and adventure; a true reminder that it's the company, not the weather, that makes the memories.

Explorers Leaders