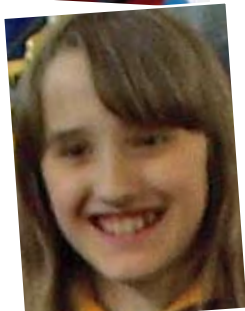


2008-2009



Introduction by District Chairman

During 2008 we celebrated 100 years of Scouting in Gillingham with a centenary birthday bash for past and present members at the Howard School Rainham. The day culminated with the cutting of a special birthday cake, one of several made specially by one of our Leaders. The cost of the event was offset by a very successful District Raffle with Groups taking a share of the profits.

A small group of people headed up by Alan Billingham produced an excellent centenary book, charting the progress of all Gillingham Groups over the last 100 years. Unfortunately to date only 145 have been sold and we need to reach 350 sales to cover the costs, even taking into account generous sponsorship from the Kent Messenger Group and Paper Co.

Paul Barker, the District Commissioner, resigned suddenly at the end of November 2008 and interim arrangements were put into place by the County Commissioner. It

was recently announced that Dean Harding would be the Acting District Commissioner in conjunction with his role as Assistant County Commissioner (Scouts). Dean is well known in Gillingham and we wish him well in his new role. He will need all our support for the challenges which lie ahead, which I am certain will be forthcoming from all of us.

It has been disappointing to record our membership decline over the last few years particularly as the national trend is for increasing numbers. This is one of the biggest challenges ahead, and although I detect a slight interest in new members we need to make sure that we offer good Scouting programmes to encourage young people to join and stay.

Despite a lot of hard work by a small number of people it was necessary to close the 18th Scout Group in July 2008, due to a lack of numbers and Leaders. The District Executive is currently endeavouring to arrange an alternative use for the building, which has a long lease with a modest annual expenditure.

The administrative side of the District together with the financial arrangements remain strong, although the current world financial situation has affected interest rates on the District's investments. The interest has traditionally been utilised to keep down the District membership fees. The District Executive will need to keep this under review.

I must record my gratitude to the District Executive for their work over the last year which has at times been challenging without a District Commissioner. I must thank particularly, Maureen Billingham, Gillian Fairclough and Marion Isaacs for stepping into the breach as Minutes secretary.

Finally, thanks to all Leaders, helpers and administrators in all of the Groups for their hard work every week to provide Scouting for our young people.

David Ainsley
District Chairman

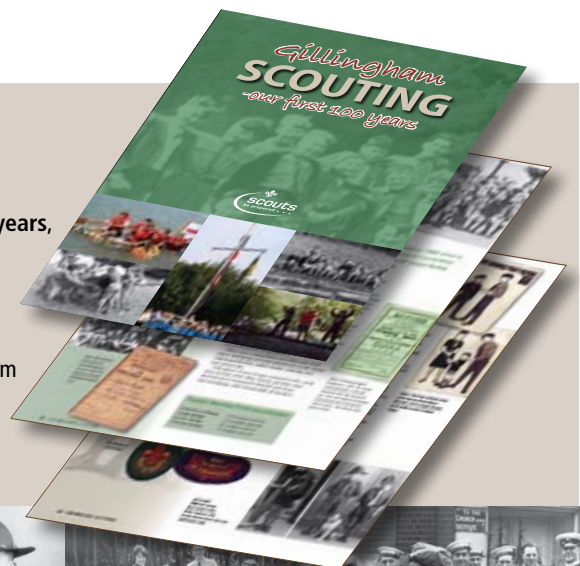


Our first 100 years

TO mark its centenary year Gillingham Scouts published a commemorative book. **Gillingham Scouting-our first 100 years**, consisting of 36 pages printed in full colour, includes many photographs of scouting activities throughout the years as well as some interesting memories from some of our longest serving members.

Copies of the book are available, price £5, from any Gillingham Scout Group or the District Scout Fellowship. Alternatively, email centbook@gillinghamscouts.org.uk

Some images from the book



Beavers celebrate

Two Beaver Colonies celebrated special anniversaries in November. The colony at the 5th Gillingham was formed in 1987 and the Group put on a special 21st birthday event for the beavers at a camp site in Bredhurst. All members of the Group and their parents enjoyed a fun packed afternoon finishing with a camp fire and birthday cake. The Beavers were presented with their Kent Invicta Challenge Award badges. The Beaver Colony at the 14th Gillingham celebrated their 10th birthday at Splashes. Beavers, Cubs and Scouts enjoyed a swim followed by food and a birthday cake. Members of the 14th Group are shown cutting their birthday cake.



District AGM

At last year's District AGM, held at Rainham Mark Grammar School in June, the five Explorer Scouts from Gillingham who attended the centenary World Jamboree in Essex gave a short talk on their experiences at the jamboree accompanied by a slide presentation. This was followed by a fascinating and interesting talk from Bill Cockcroft, the Jamboree Director.

Additional copies of this Annual Review can be downloaded from the website:
www.gillinghamscouts.org.uk

Beavers visit Howletts

In May over 90 Beavers from Gillingham District (biggest contingent in the County) went totally wild at Howletts Zoo for the County Beaver Day. It was a very hot day so not many of the animals wanted to come out and play. Luckily this did not spoil the day as all the Beavers had a fun day learning about all the different habits of the animals enabling them to achieve their Animal Friends badge.

St George's Day

BEAVERS, Cubs, Scouts, Explorer Scouts and Leaders were joined by families and friends at Priestfield Stadium, Gillingham on Sunday 27 April for their annual St George's Day Service. The Service was conducted by District Chaplain, Revd Karen Best.

Mr Paul Clark, MP for Gillingham and Rainham and Mr Kelvin Holford, DL, County Commissioner for Kent Scouts attended the Service.

During the Service the County Commissioner presented Silver Acorns - in recognition of specially distinguished services to Scouting - to Tony Fairclough, Keith Salmon, David Lawrence and Alan Billinghamurst.



CHIEF SCOUT Peter Duncan is surrounded by Gillingham Beavers, Cubs and Scouts at Priestfield Stadium. He arrived at the Stadium shortly after the St George's Day Service to play in a Celebrity Charity football match.



Winner of President's Trophy

THE 1st Gillingham Scout Group won the President's Trophy for 2008, and Lisa Mallon is pictured receiving the trophy from Mr Alan Holman, Vice President of Gillingham Scouts, at last year's District AGM.

Alan initiated the President's Trophy in 1989 when he stood down as District President and Iris Wynne, our current District President thought it fitting that he should make the presentation in our Centenary Year.



Members of the District Fellowship pause for a short break during their ramble around Chilham in April.



Essex Jamboree

Scouts and Explorers from the 1st Gillingham spent a week in July at the Essex Jamboree held in Kirby-Le-Soken. They had a great week and the young people got to do a different activity each day from Go-Karting, Sailing to a relaxing day at the Beach. The theme for the week was endangered species with each of the 11 sub camps having an endangered animal as their logo and name. They got to meet people from all around the globe, learn about their cultures in the international zone, swap badges and make new friends.

Going for Gold

Cubs from Gillingham joined others from around the County at 'Going for Gold' - a day of fun Olympic activities - held at the County Showground, Detling in November. The Cubs were able to test their skills at the various Olympic disciplines including Equestrian, Gym & Jump, Fencing and Stuff, Cycling and Rowing, Field and Track, Shooting and Weightlifting, Swimming and Balls! Members from the Gillingham Scout Fellowship are pictured above supervising some of the activities.



Fun Drum

About 50 Beavers attended the Christmas party which was held in December at Fun Drum to give the leaders a break and the kids a chance to let off some steam. This was a change to the normal disco and buffet, but all the Beavers came away from the event happy and very tired. They were given full run of Fun Drum for an hour before having a light snack (most just wanted to go back and play), before having a funny few final goes on the big slide. They then had the party bag and a game of 'Hunt my shoes'.

50 Years Service

Iris Wynne (District President) and 'Ginger' Harfleet (Fellowship Member) received their 50 years Service Award. Ginger and Iris are pictured with their certificates following the presentation at last year's AGM.



Beavers visit Wildwood

IN September 56 Beaver Scouts and 18 adults from all over Gillingham travelled to the Wildwood Trust to find out about their Beaver Brothers' habits and see what their home looked like.

They learnt all about the beaver, how to build a lodge and got to make a mask. Later they went for a walk around the woods of Wildwood to see all the different types of animals within the Trust, including wild boar, otters, wild horses, wolves, beavers and much more.



Awards Presentation

The annual Awards Presentation was held at the Royal Dockyard Church in March.

Mr Paul Clark, MP for Gillingham and Rainham, presented certificates to Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorer Scouts who had achieved their Chief Scout's Award during the past year. The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Ted Baker, presented Good Service certificates to a number of Leaders.

Roger Isaacs and Mawson Knight were both presented with their Award for Merit, for outstanding services to Scouting, by the County Commissioner, Kelvin Holford, DL.



RN Recognition

In September the 4th Gillingham retained their status as a Royal Navy recognised Sea Scout Group, following an Admiralty Inspection by Lt Cdr David Griffiths BSc, BA, RN (pictured above). The Scouts put on a display of sailing, canoeing, rowing, sculling and powerboat off The Strand followed by the Inspection and colours.



James Wilkinson, a Gillingham Explorer Scout, had the honour of carrying the St George's Flag at last year's Queen's Scouts Parade at Windsor.

Edinburgh Chase

Explorer Scouts from the Hydra Explorer Scout Unit took part in the Edinburgh Chase in May.

The Edinburgh Chase is an annual 15 to 20 mile night navigation exercise undertaken on foot across footpaths and minor roads in North West Kent. First established in 1972 as a publicity event for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, 'The Chase' has evolved into an event supported by Kent Youth Service that attracts hundreds of participants from across the UK. Teams of four have to find up to ten checkpoints on a circular route. All team members completing the course are awarded a commemorative medal and certificate.



Fellowship BBQ

The District Scout Fellowship held their annual BBQ (you would have thought they had enough cooking burgers and sausages at the Centenary Birthday Party the week before!!) in Arthur and June Laming's garden in July.



Remembrance Day

Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Explorer Scouts, Leaders and Fellowship members from across the District attended Remembrance Day Services held at St Margaret's Church in Rainham, St Augustine's Church in Gillingham, St Matthew's Church in Wigmore and the Army Barracks in Gillingham. Wreaths were laid on behalf of Gillingham Scouts.



The latest edition and back issues of *Gillingham Scout News* can be downloaded from the website:
www.gillinghamscouts.org.uk

Centenary Birthday Party

OVER 500 people attended a Centenary Birthday Party held at the Howard School, Rainham in July.

Activities included bouncy castles, circus skills, steel band, scalextric and crafts. There was free candy floss and popcorn. The Scout Fellowship spent the afternoon cooking well over 500 burgers and sausages and the party ended with the cutting of several cakes and a camp fire. Everyone went home with a party bag which included a centenary blanket badge.



Pictures show the centenary cake, some of the excited party goers and the centenary badge. The centenary badge was based on the winning design in a competition run early in 2008.

Raft Race

In one of the basins at the Historical Dockyard on a rather beautiful (warm) sunny Sunday in September, a brave and hearty number of Scouts took part in the District Raft race. The object was to construct and then race a raft across one of the basins. After a hard day of constructing and racing a team from the 4th were declared champions. Thanks to Michael Mount and his crew for organising this event.



County Quiz

Gillingham Scout Fellowship entered two teams for the County Quiz at Sevenoaks and managed a creditable 4th and 5th places out of 12 teams.



Gillingham Scout News

Gillingham Scout News goes from strength to strength reporting on Group and District events on a monthly basis. Over the past year one Group has been distributing GSN regularly to parents and it is hoped that other Groups will begin to do this in the coming months.

'Moon Run' success

Members of the 20th Gillingham (pictured below) were among 1500 who attended the 'Sun Run' in Cheltenham over a weekend in July. The teams decided not to enter the 26 mile walk but to concentrate their efforts on the shorter 11 mile Moon Run. Despite the severe weather, high winds and driving rain, they achieved Senior Male title, Senior Female title and first Group to get six members home.



Census

Membership in Gillingham is down again this year. Last year's numbers in brackets:

BEAVER SCOUTS	187(180)
CUB SCOUTS	236(273)
SCOUTS	168(194)
EXPLORERS	76(62)
NETWORK	0 (3)
LEADERS/ADULTS	198(196)
TOTAL	865(908)

Football Competition



On a Saturday in October at St Margaret School in Rainham the District football competition was held. A number of teams from Groups in Gillingham ignored the rather chilly conditions and had a great day of football. After a strongly contested competition the team from the 5th were crowned the winners. This was the second year the 5th had won, so more to defend this year. Thanks to Dean and his team for organising the event.

ROAR

DESPITE the day being very cold and wet, the five Packs from Gillingham who travelled together to Howletts Zoo for ROAR, organised by the County Cub team, had an enjoyable time. Here, Cubs from 22nd Pack were fascinated by the antics of the lemurs in their open enclosure.



District Chaplain

The District said farewell to Revd Karen Best last October. Karen had been District Chaplain since 2004 and was central to our successful St George's Day Services over the past few years. Karen is pictured at last year's Service held at Priestfield Stadium.



Cub Night Hike

This year the Cub Night Hike was won by a team, pictured below, from 4th Dolphin Pack. Organised by 22nd Group, the hike took the participants across fields, beside the motorway towards Queendown Warren, Matts Hill and Bredhurst with incidents on the way. Once all the Packs had safely returned the Cubs settled down for the night and were collected after breakfast the following morning.



Christingle

Cubs and Beavers from the 4th Gillingham took part in the Christingle activity and service for youth organisations held at St Margaret's Church, Rainham in December. They made Christingles in the Millennium Centre before processing to Church for the service.



Pedal Car Olympics

Scouts and Explorers from the 1st Gillingham braved sub zero conditions to join 113 teams taking part in the Pedal Car Olympics at Thriftwood, Essex over a weekend in January.

The weekend was filled by various Olympic events - Endurance, Team Relay, Driving Skills, Pursuit and Jousting - followed by building of a camp fire which gave the young people a chance to get to know some different scout and guide groups. The weekend finished off with the awards ceremony in which Kathy and Jake (pictured with their certificate) collected 1st in senior blind skills.



Cubs Skills Day

Cubs from seven packs enjoyed a variety of activities at the Cubs Skills afternoon based at the 1st Gillingham HQ in November. Among the bases for the Cubs to try were shoebox cooking, electrical circuits, lashings, mini pioneering, sweet knotting, plaster casts and a treasure trail of tracking signs through St. Luke's Church.

Town Hunt

30 Scouts took part in the District Scout Town Hunt in February. The course involved a circular route encompassing both the 5th and 11th Gillingham Scout Headquarters. They had to answer various questions along the way including numbers on pelican crossings and collection times on post boxes. There were also a couple of checkpoints which tested tying knots and bandages. Thanks to Jon Green and Chris Divers and their team for organising the event.

District website

The District website continues to flourish receiving regular enquiries from parents wishing to enrol their children. The monthly Gillingham Scout News is available to download to anyone visiting the site and GSN Extra and other information is available to all Leaders in a secure password protected section.



Visit the
Gillingham Scouts Website at
www.gillinghamscouts.org.uk