



Sedgemoor District Scout Council Annual Report 2007-2008

-Working with and for Young People-



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2007-2008

It has been a memorable year and with the Century celebrations that's how it should be. Elsewhere in the report you will read of various events both at District and Group level of how we all celebrated. From the wet weekend of the County Centenary Camp, a very windy sandcastle competition to the hot days of July how we celebrated!

For me a personal memory will be sharing the Sunrise with 1st Bridgwater and many of you will have shared similar experiences. Even local bell ringers some ex-Scouts and Guides got in on the act and rang a peal in our honour at Over Stowey Village Church.

Our Young people who represented you all at the World Jamboree were a credit and a few weeks ago they said a big thank you to their supporters. An evening enjoyed by all who attended and reassurance that all who went had the time of their lives.

Our Explorers were invited to take part in the Civic Service – a first for us and I have a suspicion it will not be the last.

On reflection I feel the chief benefactor of these events is Sedgemoor District. We have had maximum publicity and there is a lot of goodwill out there for Scouts which we should build on.

There is still a need to find leaders. We all know what effect lack of adults has upon Groups and sections and it is up to us all to find suitable people however much or little time they can give.

Unfortunately we still have not made an appointment for DC – it has not been for lack of trying and we continue to search for that special suitable person to lead us.

My heartfelt thanks to the Executive Committee, Colina, all District Staff, Fellowship members and all of you for the unstinting work you have done throughout the year for Sedgemoor and it's Scouting population.

Pam Jamieson
Chairman

BEAVER SCOUT REPORT

We now have 6 Beaver Colonies in the District, sadly 3 had to close due to lack of leaders.

The joint meetings with Cub Leaders as there is no ADC Beavers are still being held and going very well.

Only 2 Chief Scout Broze awards have been presented this year, but all the Beavers are working hard towards the new badges which came out during the year.

St. George's parade had a good turn out from all Colonies and looked very smart.

A District Beaver evening was held at Chilton Trinity Sports Centre, although not very well supported all those that attended enjoyed themselves doing the different activities.

Also to celebrate 21 years of Beavers we had a birthday party. Plenty of games and a commemorative birthday cake was presented to the Beavers. Only one colony attended the centenary camp but had a great day.

To commemorate 100 years of Scouting the District Sandcastle Competition was open to all sections. The Beaver section was won by 14th Bridgwater Beavers.

I would like to thank all leaders for their hard work and for the excellent programmes they run from week to week. My special thanks to Colina Hine, Jim & Annette Berry for all their advice and to the Fellowship for their help at events.

Jill Groves

CUB SCOUT REPORT

There are 13 Cub Packs within the District. Brent Knoll had to close due to lack of leaders, but the good news is Wedmore have been able to restart with 2 new leaders.

I have presented 6 Chief Scout Silver awards this year and the changes in the Cub programme have meant more fun and challenge for Cubs. Leaders meetings have been held on a regular basis and have been well supported compared to last year.

The District Quiz was held again - 1st BOS (Kingfisher) won the trophy with 2nd Weare & District and 3rd 1st Berrow. The County Quiz was held in Sedgemoor and was won by Weare & District.

As we were celebrating 100 years of Scouting the District Sandcastle competition was open to all and was well supported by all packs. District Sixer/Secunder camp was held again at Fiddington with the theme "The Big Birthday". We had over 100 cubs in attendance and a cake was delivered by Orchard FM Black Thunder. There was a real mixture of bases from crazy golf to centenary plate painting to name but a few. We were lucky with the weather as elsewhere in the District it rained !! St George's Day Parade was well supported by a very smart cub section. Again we were blessed with good weather which meant refreshments on the grass in the sunshine.

The big event of the year was the centenary camp at Ilton. This was open for the first time to all sections of the movement. Four of our Packs attended, the weather was appalling, the cubs if not all the leaders enjoyed themselves.

In November I arranged a fun evening for Packs. It was a very poor turn out although those who came enjoyed it.

I would like to thank all leaders without whose hard work and time the Cubs would not learn and enjoy themselves so much. I would like to thank the Fellowship for their help at events. A special thanks to Iris for all her help visiting sections. Also my thanks to Terry Hine, Pam & Dave Jellett for all their help. Thank you Annette & Jim Berry who are always there when I need help. Thanks also to Colina Hine for her help and advice and to Ben for his help behind the scenes and at times becoming my Personal Secretary.

Jill Groves

Assistant District Commissioner - Cub Scouts

ADC Scouts' Report

2007 was Scouting's centenary year, and as might have been expected Scouts in Sedgemoor district took their part in many specific events of many highs and few lows. One of the most notable was a 100 mile hike from Somerset into Devon undertaken by 1st Bridgwater, with members from Huntspill and Highbridge joining them for part of the hike. Most Troops in our district attended the County Centenary Camp at the end of May held at RNAS Berryfield, which in place of the annual Somerset jamboree welcomed scouts from all sections of the movement.

Within the district we had a district Scout section camp, near Cheddar, but as it turned out just over the border in Avon. This was the first such camp while I have been ADC, and in the end just 45 Scouts joined in a weekend of hiking, caving and backwoods cooking. A few of the scouts did not have the stomach for skinning and cooking a rabbit, but most were able to do this under expert guidance. All enjoyed their chance to go underground caving, and to undertake the hike. The sandcastle competition took place in the summer and this year Beavers, Cubs and Explorer scouts were invited to join the Scouts. Events finished just in time to avoid the many castles, with a 100 theme, being washed away by the rising tide before judging. In December we held a Ready Steady Cook competition at Burnham on Sea headquarters, when 12 teams took part. The teams were each given an identical parcel of ingredients from which they proceeded to make their meals, of at least two courses, and in one case, four courses. The two teams tying for second place, with the winners not available, went on to represent the District in the County Master Chef competition in January, where they came a very creditable second and third, separated by just one point, and not many points behind the winners, who, rumour has it, practice at least once a month.

Scouts from various Troops in the District have also taken part in other County events, such as the Mountain Bike challenge and the County challenge, where the aim was as much to take part as to achieve a winning place.

Members of at least two Groups in the District visited the World scout Jamboree held in the summer near Chelmsford, and I hope that some of the younger members will be encouraged to apply for places at the 2011 Jamboree to be held in Sweden.

During the past twelve months I have again managed to visit all Troops, some more than once, and during these visits have presented thirteen Gold Chief Scouts Awards. Unfortunately not all Troops are as successful and active as the rest, and I believe that this is still mainly because they do not have sufficient experienced leaders, or leaders who are able to devote enough time to Scouting as a result of family or work commitments. The number of Troops declined by one to nine at the end of 2007, with the closure of the 1st Berrow Troop, where numbers had dwindled, and no replacement could be found for the Scout Leader who resigned with effect from the end of the year. While this is a common problem with too many Troops operating with insufficient leaders, I understand the problem is even more acute in Berrow where a youth club was also closed or closing, and the Cub pack is also in danger. On the brighter side a new Scout Troop is being formed at North Petherton, with an opening date of 23rd April. Here four potential new leaders came forward, although one subsequently had to drop out as a result of serious family illness. The other three,

one of whom has previous Scouting experience, and one has Guiding experience, have already attended several training modules and are well prepared for the new Troop. At Cheddar there has been another change in Scout Leader. Last year Paul Fenwick had taken on the role, but in the end found it impossible to get to Troop meetings on time, and has been replaced by Dale Kellaway who has recently moved into the district. During the next twelve months I would like to see a concerted effort being made to find more adults willing to join as helpers or as appointed leaders. Perhaps the Groups which have Cubs but no Scouts will be able to start new Troops.

At the end of what I would consider to have been a largely successful twelve months I must give my heartfelt thanks to those Scout section leaders who have made my job as ADC so easy. On arranging dates for events a number of those leaders have been so willing to take on responsibilities for various aspects of the events, leaving me with no more onerous task than being there. Thank you to all of them who have been able and willing to take on the various tasks in addition to the jobs of leading their Troops.

David J Rolfe
ADC Scouts

Sedgemoor Explorer Scouts

This years report takes you through a year in the life of an Explorer Scout

May

29 Sedgemoor Explorers went to the Centenary Camp, 21 of these were members of the World Jamboree contingent. Special activities were laid on for Explorers one of these was scuba diving without wet suits (trunks and T-shirts) in near winter conditions. Appalling weather conditions made the camp one to remember

June

June is the start of our Summer Programs. We try and spend as much time out of huts and doing outdoor activities. This month tends to get very wet with Kayaking at Langport and Raft Building.

The Explorers make good use of our wonderful countryside around us. Most months in rain, sleet, snow or sometime when it's dry we will be playing on the Mendips, Brent Knoll, the Quantocks, Brean Down or Berrow Sands. This month North and Mid Units were up on the Mendips and South Unit were on the Quantocks

As a continuation of their training the World Jamboree Contingent visited Brownsea Island

July

18 Leaders and Explorers took part in the Sun Run. For those who have not heard this before it is a weekend camp just outside Cheltenham. The

party starts of Friday evening with live bands playing in a large barn. After a little sleep, Saturday is full of activities, team competitions, and stage performances. During the evening the Sun Run (26.2 mile hike) and the Moon Run (13mile hike) took place.

The South Unit held a fossil hunt on Kilve beach

We had a record number of Explorers turn for the Sandcastle Competition. This year they built a large 100 sandcastle and retained the Explorer Trophy. Next year we may put in two teams.

End of July was the start of the World Jamboree. 21 of our Explorers left for Hylands Park, Chelmsford to have an experience of a lifetime.

The 21st World Scout Jamboree brought together some 28,000 young people - girls and boys, aged between 14 and 17 - and 12,000 adult leaders from more than 150 countries.

August After 2 weeks of life in the Scouting World of the World Jamboree the event came to a close. Our 21 members returned to life in Sedgemoor changed people.

A social evening of Ten Pin bowling at Taunton gave the opportunity for us to find out what happened at the World Jamboree

September

This marks a new year for Explorers. This is the time for planning for next year. We also managed to Shelter building at Kings Wood and complete a pioneering project of Medium size Ballistics.

October

The District entered 2 Explorer Teams to the County Hill walking on Dartmoor. Two walks were planned. Saturday was the big one taking all day, the second was for Sunday morning. Both groups preformed well hitting most check points most of the time.

Every year all the Explorers in the District get together for their Annual General Meeting. This year integrated this with a Camp at Tivington near Minehead. Saturday a walk from Minehead to Porlock was planned. The AGM took place on the Saturday Evening over a camp fire. Sunday we visited Dunster Castle.

November

An Apple picking camp was held at Barrington Court. Apples and pears were washed, crushed, pressed and placed in containers. Natural Fermentation would change this liquid into cider after a few months. The pear cider made is being entered as an exhibit at this years Bath and West Show.

This year 16 Explorers and Leaders helped the Cheddar Lions Club with their Public Fireworks display again. We provided help with crowd control, manning entrance points and car park control. With good

weather and a large crowd our help was well appreciated. After the fireworks we held a BBQ and camp fire, followed by an overnight camp. After breakfast we went for a walk on the Mendips.

Explorers attended local services at Highbridge, Burnham, Bridgwater and Cheddar on Remembrance Sunday.

Burnham Carnival contacted me asking if the Explorers could lend a hand with the Carnival as they were short of volunteers. On the night we had 16 Explorers out collecting money along side the procession. A successful night with most of us collecting 2 bucket loads of coins. Well done.

The last week of November we held a party for the Scouts. One turned up from Burnham and a number from Highbridge. The Explorers ran the whole evening and I was chucked outside to light and cook the BBQ (it was extremely cold outside but dry) I was impressed the way each Explorer took charge of the games they organised. I had a chance to talk to each Scout and was heartened to here they knew all about Explorers and were excited about the prospect of moving up when they are 14.

December

This year I had the honour to attend all 3 Units Christmas Meals. All 3 were totally different which reflects the diversity of the Units in our District.

South cooked a full Christmas dinner from scratch at the Campbell Rooms. Roast Turkey, roast potatoes, sausages raped in bacon, carrots, peas, Brussels sprouts, stuffing balls and gravy, with Christmas Pudding and cream to follow. While this was cooking, the Explorers erected a party tent, decorated it, and set up tables from which we eat our feast. North met up at the Wedmore Scout Hut and had a full Chinese sit down meal. This was followed by playing Funny Fireman and Human Noughts and Crosses.

Mid held their traditional BBQ on Burnham Beach. This was preceded by a game of frizbee football and finished off with a wide game in the dunes. What a great way to finish an exceptional year in Scouting.

January

On Sunday 6th Jan we were invited to the Chairman of Sedgemoor Civic Service at Bridgwater. South met up with members of North to attend a reception at the Council Offices. From there we led the procession of Dignitaries to St Andrews Church where we formed a Guard of Honour for the Chairman at the entrance to the Church. (See press for details). Afterwards we went to the Campbell Rooms to play games that included a torch and total darkness. For health and safety reasons I do not wish to expand on this.

February

The Young People, who went to the World Jamboree, held a Presentation Evening and shared with the large audience their experiences. Thanks for a wonderful evening.

We are probably the only large youth organisation in this country to allow their members to camp throughout the year. So we try and make the most of it.

Friday 15th Feb was the start of the Explorers Winter Camp at the Campbell Rooms. All three District Units were represented. After introductions the weekend's program was explained, followed by a film show, camp fire, supper and bed.

Saturday morning, breakfast was prepared by the Leaders. After this team building games were played. Frost was still on the ground when we set off to Great Wood for a BBQ. The coals took a long time to get any heat to be able to cook so in the mean time the Explorers played capture the flag, learnt how to throw a boomerang and make a bow and arrow. After lunch it was back to the Campbell Rooms to plan the evening activity. They were split into two teams of six of mixed abilities and experience and told they would be leaving the hut at 21:00 following a route that would take them is a figure of eight on the Quantocks and after 34K would bring them back to the hut. Along the route they would be asked to complete a number a tasks. They were helped to create a full Risk Assessment as well as detailed Route plans. Neither team would be allowed to leave until these were completed.

With paper work and equipment checked and a belly full of pasta at 21:00 on the dot both groups set off. Nothing could have prepared me for what was about to happened over the next hour and a half. The first group confidently set of up the road towards Great Wood. To second group stopped outside the hut and started to discuss which way to go. After a few minutes off they set, in the wrong direction. I managed to stop them and suggested they looked at their maps and took a compass bearing. Again after some discussion of they set, again in the wrong direction. Again they were stopped and I suggested they might want to find a footpath. After a few seconds they realised where they were meant to go and started looking for the footpath. I pointed out the footpath post I had been leaning on for the last quarter of an hour may be what they wanted. So off they set through the dark on a cold frosty Saturday night.

I went into the hut to get ready to move to the first checkpoint. I was disturbed after 10 minutes by talking outside the hut. I went out to investigate only to find the first group had returned and discovered they had set off in the wrong direction. I check their routes and agreed and sent them off up the footpath. We now had both groups walking the route in the same direction. This should have been able to be corrected when both teams reached the first check point.

At the first check point all the Leaders were waiting for the first telephone check. We had arranged this to happen every hour. Each team had to give the map reference, the state of their team, and how far they were near to the schedule. The team that left second and gone in the wrong direction were first to check in.

Group - "We're lost"

Leader - "Any idea where you are?"

Group - "no"

Leader - "what can you see around you"

Group - "nothing, it's dark"

Leader - "do you think you can back track and make your way back to the hut"

Group - "We can try"

Leader - "OK I will meet you back at the hut"

Half an hour later this group had returned to the hut, checked they knew exactly where they were going and off they went again. After an hour and a half all groups were heading in the correct directions. IT WAS GOING TO BE A LONG NIGHT.

Fortunately that was the last problems each group had with navigation. As the night went on the temperature dropped. From midnight we had a couple drop out but on the whole both teams were doing well. During the night the temperature dropped to minus seven degrees and still the groups continued. At five o'clock both teams met up at the top of the route. Sum lads were very tired and were pulled off and brought back to the hut. The numbers were reduced so much the only way we could continue was by making one super team. Did they want to give up and go back to the nice warm hut and get some sleep or did they want to continue the walk. They wanted to continue the walk

By eleven o'clock Sunday morning everyone was safely back at the hut. Time to have breakfast a full de-brief for the weekend and clean the building up.

I was very proud of our group. The young people that walked through some very cold temperatures and kept cheerful, even after the disastrous start from both teams. And the Leaders who kept the young people safe (from a distance) throughout the night, often manning checkpoints for hours at a time in freezing temperatures. Well done.

Mick White – District Explorer Scout Commissioner (DESC)

Campbell Room Annual Report

Well, where did that year go then? I was warned about this when I retired from work! It's a year now since I took over from Derek Briggs as the Chairman of the Campbell Room committee, and he left me with a big pair of shoes to fill. However, I feel now that I am beginning to fit into them a bit more comfortably now.

There are two main things to report on for this year. 1 -Our lease for the Campbell Room from Over Stowey Parish Council Trustees 2 - Our plans to develop the Campbell Room. 1. Our lease had not been renewed from the Trustees for almost 30 years, and over that period we have paid £ 10.00 per annum rent. However, the Trustees have sought to increase our rent and bring it on to a more commercial footing. After much debating between our District Executive Committee, Over Stowey Parish Council Trustees and the Campbell Room Committee, we have agreed a new sum for the rent. This new figure is set at £ 1,000 p.a. which is reviewable every 5 years by all parties. It was met with regret that the Guide Association, felt that they were unable to meet this extra cost, so they have dropped out of being the co-users of the premises. The full title now is The Campbell Room Scout Activity Centre.

2. For some time now we have considered the Campbell Room does not meet the full needs of the groups who use the premises insofar that as there are no separate sleeping quarters for either of the sexes. Our committee has decided that we need to overcome this. To do this we need to build a log cabin extension to sleep 8 people. The business plan has been submitted and the building plans are in the process of being drawn up. Our next step will be to secure £ 5,000 to complete the project. No problems there then!

Bookings.

Bookings have been down on previous years and we believe that this is mainly due to the past 12 months being affected by the World Jamboree. This, we think resulted in Groups doing other things. However, our bookings now seemed to have picked up again, and we are having inquiries from Backpacker magazine and from the internet. One notable booking is that Blake School have booked for an entire week in July.

May I conclude by making a plea to your Group to use the Campbell Room in future. We do need your support and funding to keep the Centre open for you. New committee members will be made most welcome. No experience necessary!

John Heal (Chairman)

Sedgemoor District Scout Fellowship Report 2007 – 2008

It has been an odd year with all the comings and goings for the World Jamboree, during the last year, but we have fulfilled quite a lot on our programme.

Sadly I have to report a loss of five of our members, due to other commitments and also changing their addresses, and some just no contact as time marches on, so our number are a little depleted by our normal register. I also think that with the necessary increase in fees last year it has put some people off, maybe.

Nevertheless we have maintained a full programme with an activity every month, although a few times not that well attended, but it is realised that members have other commitments also, so we try for the majority to keep up the morale. A few members have been helping some groups, Cubs and Scouts, floundering through lack of leadership or sickness and of course members have been helping out with the usual refreshments for different occasions for groups and the district. I do thank everyone involved, as we are all busy people, so it is very much appreciated in all they find time to support.

Our programme this past year is as follows: - in July we enjoyed Pam and Roger Jamieson's Garden Party; September, we had a visit to a Cider producer at Watchfield; November, we held a campfire at the Campbell Room, on the Quantocks; December, we had a Christmas get together in a local pub; January, we held a quiz with a cheese and wine party, at the Highbridge HQ; February, there was our usual games night of playing UNO, at Westfield Church, and in March we held our annual dinner at the Bower Manor Inn. The Fellowship will be helping with the St Georges Day Service and Parade to be held at St Mary's Church, Bridgwater on 27 April and the Fellowship AGM is being held on 7 May at Watchfield Inn, when the next year's programme will be discussed.

Once again I thank all the members that have contributed to the running of the Fellowship this year.

Darby Allen
Chairman, Sedgemoor District Scout Fellowship