

**Fifth Beckenham South Scout Group  
Annual Report**

April 2020 – March 2021

**Group Scout Leader – Adam Young**

2020 saw a new challenge for Scouting, moving to a virtual environment. The Network and older Explorers experimented early with Zoom nights, Pictionary, quizzes and at times just an opportunity to meet and chat over Zoom. Once safeguarding precautions had been put in place the Explorers quickly followed suit and met weekly on Zoom with a variety of activities from online escape rooms to board games and a few cooking and baking challenges, the benefit of those was that the Explorers made a mess in their own kitchens rather than the Scout hut.

Beavers and Cubs soon followed too, not so easy to engage the younger sections with Zoom but they persevered with good numbers of attendance and both ran virtual camps with the kids making dens in their houses and or sleeping in tents in their gardens with some zoom group activities slotted into the weekend. Cubs and Beavers earned their Camp at Home badges and retention of numbers was higher than expected which is a testament to the enthusiasm and commitment of the section leaders.

The entire Group and its families were amazing in generously and

continuously supporting our local Food Bank, Christ Church Anerley. People turned out literally every Saturday throughout the spring and summer months and donated food at the Scout hut whilst they took their family walks as was the nations favourite past time during lockdown and as the autumn drew in, the Mayor of Bromley awarded a certificate of Gratitude and Appreciation to the team of organisers of the 'Fifth Big Food Appeal'. Whilst the good work still continues with online donations that are turned into food shopping and delivered weekly, there was one last hoorah as a special Christmas collection was made which saw four large cars full collected and delivered to those less fortunate, including some incredible Christmas hampers full of goodies.

The Group "came together" during the fine summer of 2020 to make a virtual water fight video which can be seen here:

<https://www.scoutsphotos.com/2020/Virtual-Water-Fight/>

September saw Scouting return under an Amber state of readiness, restrictions on outdoor meetings only, reduced numbers and lots of bubbles, staggered starts and risk assessments but we managed to get a fair few outdoor meetings done, in particular

for Cubs who were joined by a new leadership team and structure of some willing volunteers recruited and arm twisted and also the Explorers who don't seem to mind being out in the dark in Frylands wood, building shelters, lighting fires and playing wide games. The Beavers who also restructured their leadership team, merged into one single Colony temporarily and began preparations for reopening again as two colonies once restrictions were lifted. Little did we know that Covid would continue throughout winter and into the spring of 2021.

The New Year saw much of the same online Zoom meetings as we patiently waited for Scouting to return again outdoors when the evenings would be light enough to do so.

### **Beaver Scouts** (6-8yrs)

Pippin Colony continued to be led by Dave Barber, Spencer Coward and Helen Langston with assistance from Lizzie Barber when home from uni.

With the national lockdown starting in March 2020, scouting for this time period was an altogether different affair.

With no face-to-face meetings allowed, all usual events – including weekly meetings at the hut, sleepovers, days out & visits to scout centres, Remembrance Day and church parades – were all cancelled.

So, for the rest of the Spring term and throughout the period in question, we changed our approach by offering a continued beaver scout programme each week via Zoom.

For the summer term, this programme included a Hawaiian Party; the various activities towards the Gardening, Global Issues, Adventure and Experiment badges; American Independence Day celebrations and a virtual camp in July.

During the summer term, Merry Colony – led by Maddie Stratford and Fred King – also provided a range of activities to do at home to ensure continued engagement with the Beavers.

Neither of these approaches could compare with traditional Face to Face activities, but both meant that continuous contact was maintained with all the parents as well as the Beavers.

After the summer term ended, Maddie & Fred announced that they were to be married which unfortunately meant moving away from the area and leaving the 5th.

In order to keep the two colonies going, but without the benefit of new leaders, those Beavers moving up to Cubs in the Autumn term were not replaced and the remaining Beavers treated as one group.

Zoom meetings continued throughout the Autumn and Spring terms ably led by Helen, for whom a special mention should be made for the time, effort and creativity that she put in.

Attendance each week was good, averaging around 15 Beavers.

We fully appreciated that for some, Zoom meetings just did not fit the bill – not entirely surprising given the work, family and home-schooling issues experienced by all - though it was pleasing to note that during the whole pandemic only 1 child had left before we returned.

Further activities included completing the World Challenge Badge; Guy Fawkes; Remembrance Day; an online Xmas panto; the Green Cross Code; Chinese New Year and an online escape room.

By the end of the period, lockdown restrictions were beginning to ease, and preparations started for the return of outdoor meetings and, eventually, a return to normality.

Also, as instructed by the Scout Association, risk assessments were put in place for activities and games to ensure readiness for a full return to scouting.

Finally, well down to all the beavers for staying with us and taking part whenever they could – and to the parents too, from whom the messages of thanks were much appreciated.

### **Cubs** (8-10½ yrs)

This year for cubs has been very different but, despite the challenges, we have continued to meet weekly and work on badges and have had two virtual camps. As lockdown continued, we turned online, and quickly learnt the art of running cub meetings on Joom – learn how to use the mute button and disable the chat and scavenger hunts always work well! We ran the Zoom meetings as one group and regularly had 25 cubs join us online. We covered many of the basics of scouts including knot making, pioneering (with marshmallows and spaghetti) learnt about the Incas and made pan pipes. At the end of the summer term, we completed our athletics badge virtually.

In May, instead of being in Dorking on camp, we ran a virtual camp and over 20 cubs and their families camped, either outside or in their homes. We had a virtual campfire with songs led by our YL's and of course hot chocolate and s'mores, cooked ourselves eggy bread for breakfast, and did a number of challenges including a recycled boat and toilet people.

As the lockdown lifted we started a new term in September with a day out at Frylands where 36 cubs took part in making barrel carts and an assault course. We managed to squeeze in, weather permitting, a few evenings at the hut playing games. We had a further 2 evening meetings at Frylands (the last one just before second lockdown) doing fires and more Smores.

As we could not take part in the annual remembrance service in November we painted remembrance pebbles and left them on the doorstep for all to see.

Through November we also took part in the race around the world, raising money for those scout groups hit hardest by Covid19. We had to learn about different cultures and customs along the way and we did our own treasure hunt around Beckenham to find where Backshall and Glover had been. The cubs raised over £1250 for this cause. Well done.

As Christmas approached we did some Christmas crafts and for our last

meeting before Christmas made Oreos on zoom. The year was rounded off by Peter Duncan (former Chief Scout and 5th Beckenham South Cub) panto online and he gave a shout out to the cubs of the 5th Beckenham South!

The New Year and we were again on zoom starting with a scavenger hunt, learning about Tu B'Shvat. We covered Burns night and Chinese New Year on line too. For the second half of the spring term we completed our science badge over a number of evenings finishing off with chocolate at the end of term.

We also managed to squeeze in another virtual space camp in March – making egg landing craft, being an astronaut and making our own space food and building towers spaceman style, we made constellation tubes and before bed had a bedtime story from space read by Tim Peake. The next morning, we guided aliens to the hut and made fizzing moon rocks and made a rocket to return to earth. A great camp with over 20 cubs camping in a den at home and all completing their astronomer badge.

We have seen lots of change over the last year the biggest of which is Andy and Keeley Dawe not being part of our weekly meetings. They have been the backbone of cubs for over 10 years and are greatly missed and we thank you for all you have done and taught both cubs and the now leaders over the years and we look forward to

seeing you when we are camping again. We have welcomed 3 new leaders, Anna has moved from beavers to cubs and Ray and Sinead have joined the team and thank you to Adam and Debs who have supported the cubs team this year, and Andrew and Olivia who went from YL to section assistant during the year. Thank you for all you have done over the last year to keep cubs going.

Lastly, I have to thank the cubs and the parents for their resilience support and encouragement over this difficult year.

### **Scouts** (10½ - 14yrs)

Thunder troop is led by Tim Younge on a Thursday evening with Don Mullane leading Lightning troop on a Friday evening.

Following the Covid lockdown we had a very gradual start to the Scouting year with online Zoom meetings. We slowly started back with face-to-face meetings in early spring, and we commenced this programme with a 'start back Covid secure' Saturday at Frylands. During lockdown several scouts had moved up to Explorers and a number of scouts had moved up from Cubs. The day at Frylands was a great way to introduce the new scouts back to the scouting world.

Unfortunately, our summer camp was cancelled due to Covid. However, we managed to do many activities in the fresh air either using the grounds at the Hut or in local parks. The activities included orienteering, map reading, cooking, the usual 'water night' and many other activities.

Like our summer camp, the annual fireworks display had to be cancelled, but we will be back bigger and better next year and resume the fund raising for the 5th and other good causes.

We would like to thank all the leaders for their hard work and staying with us through the pandemic. We have attracted a few more helpers and Young Leaders, who have helped to make it all possible. We look forward to an action-packed programme for next year.