

County Review 2020/2021



Scouts
Hertfordshire



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County Review 2020/21: Thank you to all those who contributed content and photographs to this year's Review

Designed, edited and produced by Hertfordshire Scouts Communications Team

#TeamHertfordshire
is the adults in our
Groups, Districts and
County that come
together to deliver the
very best Scouting has
to offer to the young
people of Hertfordshire



President of Hertfordshire Scouts

Robert Voss CBE CStJ, HM Lord-Lieutenant

During my many years as a Cub and a Scout I heard the Scouting motto “Be prepared” being quoted very often.

However in early March last year no one anywhere in the world could have been prepared for what was about to impact on the entire planet. If anyone had suggested that for the foreseeable future we would be confined to our homes with schools, shops, restaurants, sports arenas and almost every other venue closed for business and that the wearing of masks would become the norm and we would be confronted with daily briefings about the rising number of deaths from an unknown killer-you might well have questioned their sanity.

Here we are some 16 months later and whilst the vaccination programme has certainly been a great success and we are seeing light at the end of the tunnel there are still some restrictions in place as I write this.

There is no doubt that this has been a difficult time for everyone involved in Hertfordshire Scouts at all levels. The essence of Scouting has been tested to the limit as face-to-face interaction has been extremely limited with campsites closed and weekly visits to Scout huts all over the county but a memory.

However Hertfordshire Scouts have not only survived but flourished and shown their true mettle by working remotely and of course helping others - one of the basic principles of Scouting.

I feel proud as your President to congratulate Scouts at all levels, adult volunteers and leaders for keeping going when the times got really tough. I certainly look forward to meeting again in person and to reverting to Scouting as we know it.



County Commissioner

Liz Walker

Wow what another year!

I ended the last Review by saying that “I know for certain that there will be one thing on my mind as I sit and write next year’s Review ... I’ll have a lot to look back on as well as how we adapted and still made Scouting happen throughout these difficult times”

Oh boy! Difficult it was. Adapt we have!

With the easing of restrictions in the latter part of last year we thought that we could spring back into Scouting and get back to doing all the things we love doing; camping, hiking, swimming, abseiling, cycling and canoeing and hanging out with our friends every week – having fun, playing games, working in a team and taking on new challenges. Unfortunately, it was short-lived and we were back online and away from our fields, our premises and our beloved activity centres.

Therefore, in a way I’m writing a similar review to last year. About another very different year to the one I imagined. Although if I really think hard, I could have imagined it... because whatever life throws at us, we make Scouting happen. I think of Scouting and immediately I’m imagining things happening, imagining activities and imagining positivity. That’s what Scouting is about. It’s about making things happen, keeping positive and having courage in all difficulties.

So, despite the challenges that were thrown at us, we have carried on Scouting – just in different ways and on different platforms. I’ve been so impressed as to how resilient our young people, volunteers and our staff have been at ensuring that Scouting happened, ensuring that young people and adults continued developing and experiencing skills for life - the very thread of what we do.

Even when we could finally meet in small groups, many chose to adopt a new way of blended Scouting. This means when we can be together we are physically together, albeit making sure that we follow specific guidelines to keep everyone safe; when we can be online we use the new digital tools we are lucky enough to have to keep people connected; and when other challenges occur we think of amazing programmes that we can do at home and involve our families in all that Scouting has to offer.

I have been privileged to ‘join in’ a few activities (from the comfort of my own home) with Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorer Scouts. I have enjoyed spending time ‘camping’ at home and seeing how different sections adapted to do things in different ways. I have enjoyed taking part in online quizzes and doing experiments in my garden. I’ve enjoyed learning new skills for life.

For the management and governance side of things it was even more difficult but with digital tools we’ve kept working hard so that Scouting is still going strong across Hertfordshire. It’s not been easy, but we’ve done it. And we’ll keep on doing it. We will do what we need to do to make sure we can keep on Scouting for a long time because it makes a difference to people’s lives.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart to all those who have made it happen. You are truly amazing.

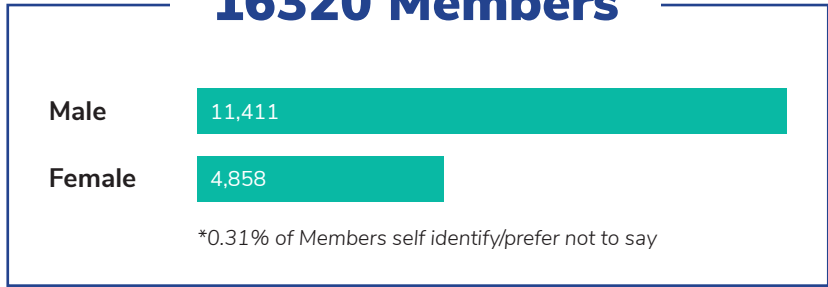
Finally, before I sign off, I guess there’s a question for those of you who don’t know Scouting - ‘Why do we do it?’.

We do it because we care, because we want our young people to develop skills, boost their wellbeing, and connect with others. With activities and adventures that our volunteers offer it’s no surprise that Scouts has been shown to be good for young people. But did you know that it’s good for volunteers too?

Volunteering’s not just about giving back – it goes both ways. It improves your wellbeing, gives you skills for the future, and helps you make new friends (and memories).

I’d love to welcome friends old and new to join me in continuing to make a difference to young people throughout Hertfordshire. After all, the number one skill in life is not giving up!

16320 Members

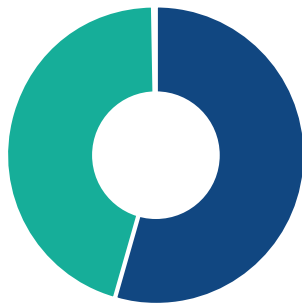


Young People

	2020	2021	Growth	Boys	Girls
Beavers	3,793	2,704	-28.7%	2,151	537
Cubs	4,787	4,004	-16.4%	3,100	884
Scouts	4,087	3,708	-9.3%	2,720	978
Explorers	1,575	1,278	-18.9%	842	433
Network	469	318	-32%	204	114
Total	14,711	12,012	-17.7%		

Adults

Young people are amazing. It's our role to help them realise this.



4,305 inspiring adults teaching #SkillsForLife

■ 1,913 - Female ■ 2,392 - Male ■ 2 - Prefer not to say

Youth Awards

	Chief Scout's Award Bronze	482
	Chief Scout's Award Silver	524
	Chief Scout's Award Gold	195
	Chief Scout's Award Platinum	22
	Chief Scout's Award Diamond	3
	Queen's Scout Award	5
	Young Leaders' Scheme	10
	Duke of Edinburgh's Award Bronze	29
	Duke of Edinburgh's Award Silver	12
	Duke of Edinburgh's Award Gold	2

Adult Awards

	Silver Wolf	1
	Bar to Silver Acorn	1
	Silver Acorn	4
	Bar to Award for Merit	5
	Award for Merit	36
	Chief Scout's Commendation for Good Service	86
	Chief Scout's Commendation for Meritorious Conduct	2



We are Scouting for Talent

Emma Ball, Marketing and Communications Manager

With this year's AGM theme as 'Carry On – a very different year of Scouting', we wanted to highlight the amazing things our young people, leaders and volunteers have done throughout the pandemic to 'carry on' and to help others; from making facemasks to raising money, from virtual camps to delivering meals to vulnerable people, it is another great opportunity for us to say Thank You to everyone and showcase the kindness, courage and resourcefulness of our Scouting community and how Scouting is **#GoodForYou**.

The pandemic has hit us hard throughout Hertfordshire and beyond. With disruption to family lives and remote schooling pressures contributing to 17.7% fewer young people taking part in Scouting across Hertfordshire in the past year.

But despite the drop in membership Hertfordshire Scouts has still thrived in its own way, our amazing leaders have adapted to a new way of delivering programmes virtually via Zoom, Teams, Google Hangouts etc, this new medium has shown that **#SkillsForLife** starts at any age! Across the UK, Scouts have spent a whopping 231 million minutes on Zoom!

The **#GoodForYou** campaign has been launched to recruit more amazing volunteers to help provide even more opportunities for young people. With more volunteers we will be able to help our young people to recover from the impact of the pandemic by supporting their wellbeing and building the skills needed to succeed in life.

We are excited to offer some great opportunities for those who are willing to put their own skills to use and learn new ones and work with some fantastic young people and the adults that support them. All roles offer the opportunity to work together supporting and contributing to an amazing life experience for you and your local community.

District Roles

We have a variety of positions available across all of our Districts. Check out our website form more information about the opportunities in your District.

County Roles

- ACC Activities
- ACC Scouts
- County Explorer Leader
- County Youth Commissioner
- District Commissioners
 - East Herts
 - Hertford
 - Watford South
 - West Herts
- Programme Team Roles
 - Programme Support
 - Communications
 - Chief Scout's Award
 - Event Planning
 - General Duties



Activity Centres Service Team

You may just want to volunteer to help on a short term basis or be interested in a more regular volunteer position with us – either way your contribution will be invaluable in helping us run and develop our Activity Centres. You'll be given full support and training to fulfil your role and become part of **#TeamHertfordshire**.

For more information about all of the roles within Districts, at County and on our Activity Centres Service Teams, visit our website:

www.vacancies.hertfordshirescouts.org.uk/volunteer-roles



Programme

Richard Haynes, DCC Programme

The programme team has had a busy year despite lockdown. I was appointed Deputy County Commissioner Programme and now oversee the programme team. We have welcomed a new ACC Cubs, Emma Ball and a new ACC 14 to 25, Jo Haynes.

During the past year the Beaver team has hosted two virtual camps, in place of our annual Beavers in Tents. The first event, Beavers in Dens, saw 350 participants join in with an action packed programme. After its success the next event, Beavers in Burrows, welcomed 1,092 participants! The Beavers enjoyed a music workshop, magic show, drawing workshop and an animal talk. They built their burrows and cooked dinner together then joined in with the campfire. They got put to bed with a bedtime story read by the author. They finished the event off with household challenges all bunny rabbit related! Thank you to the Beaver team for putting on the fun filled events.

The 14 to 25 team took Monopoly run online with 68 teams joining in to race around the world. There were 4 competitions: Scouts, Explorers, Network and Leaders. Congratulations to our 1st place winners in each category!
Scouts - The Inca Boots, Bishop's Stortford
Explorers - Virtually With It
Leaders - J-Spam National - WSJ2019
Network - Balin, Baldock and Letchworth
Thank you to the 14 to 25 team for all their hard work in putting together the event.

With face-to-face Scouting slowly restarting we hope to resume a fun filled programme for all sections. My aim is to reignite our programme support across the County, working with the County Programme Team and the ADCs to deliver the strategy to support the restart of Scouting in new and innovative ways.



International

Peter Makewell, ACC International

For Hertfordshire Scouts International section, the pandemic started earlier than for most, as we began to realise in late 2019 and early 2020 that all the planned expeditions were going to need to be shelved, cancelled, or at least delayed. We were in the unenviable position of needing to provide advice to our Leaders about how to proceed in a situation about which we had no more knowledge than the Leaders themselves. All we could do was to gain information from the experiences of friends and colleagues in other parts of the UK and other Countries around the World and use that information to help us guide our Leaders. Some expeditions were deferred, some completely cancelled, and we were quick to advise everyone not to pay any more deposits in case they were lost. We also very quickly learnt a lot about the insurance industry which, understandably withdrew Coronavirus cover very early on, and in doing so left some of our expeditions hanging in the balance for weeks and months. It became a simple situation, where if Scouting UK said we could not travel, then the insurance would cover everything, but if we cancelled because we knew the parents would no longer let their children travel, then it would not. As a result, there was a long agonising wait for the Association to announce that no one could travel and when that announcement finally came, we were able to shut down our remaining trips and breathe a deep sigh of relief. But after that what else could we do? Well, there was a need to provide guidance going forward and to encourage Leaders to plan for the return to travel, but also a need to ensure that no one paid any deposits to avoid any further losses. After that we needed to think about what else we could do to keep international Scouting going, whilst remaining compliant with the new Covid regulations. There was still JOTA and JOTI as well as the Scout of the World Award (SOWA) and The Scouts Against Malaria Campaign (SAM) and planning for the next Jamboree, and we could also still move money around the World, and so that was exactly what we did.

JOTA and JOTI

JOTA is the Jamboree on the air, and JOTI is the Jamboree on the Internet, and both were able to take place during the pandemic because they could be organised and participated in by members from their own homes with Leader guidance and parental support.

The event is one of the longest running Scouting events, having started in 1958 and over the years UK Scouts have contacted Scouts from all over the World and formed lasting friendships and often visited one another because of the contacts made.

Scout of the World Award

I first came across the Scout of the World Award (SOWA) when participating in a County-led trip to Swaziland in 2009, and I was determined that Hertfordshire Scouts should promote the award to the Network section, because it is the only award that is available exclusively to the Scout Network. When it was adopted in the UK a year or so later, the UK interpretation of the requirements meant that it was almost impossible to obtain, and so whilst we tried very hard, we were unable to get anyone from Hertfordshire through the award. This was due mainly to a lack of Discovery weekends which had to be attended by all participants in order to complete the award. Fast forward a few years and in 2016 after changes in the requirements, I challenged Alexander Hawkins, who had recently joined our Global Support Team, to become the first Hertfordshire Network member to complete the award. Well, he certainly kept me waiting, but he finished his project about a year ago, and this year, after some encouragement, made his presentation and became the first Hertfordshire Network member to complete the award. He has also already started to support two other Network members in the County to get their awards as one of two newly qualified SOWA Mentors in the County. It was a long wait, but worth it, and it proves that even in a pandemic we can adapt our Scouting and still make things happen.

Scouts Against Malaria

The original aim of the Scouts Against Malaria (SAM) campaign was to purchase and distribute malaria nets in affected countries, by engaging with local Scouts in both the distribution and education of those exposed to the malaria-carrying mosquito's. It had been established that whilst nets were being distributed throughout the affected countries, that local people often did not understand how they were to be used and so the Scouts were to be asked to demonstrate how to correctly set up and use a net. Since then, the campaign has developed and now also engages in destroying the mosquito roosts as well as net purchasing and distribution.

The Hertfordshire Global Support Team first launched their SAM campaign in January 2018 when each District in the County was given a Case of Malaria. The Case of Malaria is a box that contains a wide range of activities designed to raise awareness about malaria and enable members from all sections to raise funds and gain a badge. The contents were originally developed by Hampshire Scouts, and were turned into a booklet by the Hertfordshire Global Support Team and were more recently given an update. Since then, over £7,800 has been raised by participants from all the sections of Hertfordshire Scouts, all of whom earn the SAM Badge which they can wear on their uniform with pride. What I personally like about the SAM campaign is that it really does make a difference by saving lives in places far away from the homes of our members.

Sunday 25 April 2021 was World Malaria Day and so it was rather appropriate that earlier that week the SAM campaign was given a major boost by from 3rd St Albans Griffin Cubs. After discussions with one of their leaders, Michael Bowden, on Tuesday 20 April I was finally able to take part in my first face to face presentation of SAM badges for over 18 months. The leaders had tasked the Cubs with fundraising for the SAM campaign and in the weeks prior to the activity they had made friends with the Tamale Cubs in Uganda. The Cubs enlisted the help of Surrey Scouts to involve their new Ugandan friends in distribution of nets and the education of local people in how to use mosquito nets as well. The Cubs must have worked very hard at their mammoth fundraiser because when Michael and I spoke initially there was a fund of £1300 but by the time of the presentation just a few days later the money raised had increased to £1600 and there were several more promises of money on the night. To remain COVID safe we met in the open air and gave the badges and certificates to the Cubs but swapped our traditional handshake for a Scout salute. It felt good to be back out and doing something, even if my Scout trousers had shrunk in the wardrobe in the previous 18 months! I am personally grateful to the Griffin Cub Pack in St Albans for their tremendous effort. Despite the pandemic, Hertfordshire Scouts earlier in 2021 were still able to transfer some of the funds raised in the SAM campaign to be used for the purchase and distribution of nets. By enlisting the help of Hampshire Scouts who had existing contacts in Malawi, Ghana and Uganda, Hertfordshire money was used to purchase and distribute nets, and that really has made a difference in those countries and saved lives. Updates and videos of the distribution of nets can be found on our website.

Jamboree 2023 South Korea

It is good to be able to look ahead, as we get closer to the time when the restrictions on our daily lives will be lifted, to selecting our Jamboree Leaders. We hope to have three Units or 12 Patrols at the next Jamboree and we have set ourselves a deadline of the end of the summer for our Leader selection to be complete, by the end of the year we hope to have most of the participants in their Units. It is good to have something positive to look forward to.

Finally, as we emerge from what has been one of the strangest periods in everyone's life, we are looking forward to the resumption of our Scout adventures all around the world, making new friends, learning about other cultures, and teaching Hertfordshire Scouts how to become the best world citizens that we can be.



Bishop's Stortford and District

Maureen Hargrave, Deputy District Commissioner

After a 'normal first term' in 2020, we suddenly found ourselves unable to meet – but Scouting didn't stop! Within a week, Leaders were organising challenges for their Sections, sometimes badge-related, sometimes purely fun! Zoom and other social media were used, with Leaders developing skills alongside their Sections to fully utilise the options available. The year has not been easy; we thank everyone for the way in which the members of the District rose to meet, and overcome, the challenges.

One Group created a special badge covering different aspects of Scouting which could be achieved from home, evidence was posted on OSM to ensure an appropriate degree of challenge from Beavers to Scouts, even the Leaders joined in! Camping at home became the norm with most Sections across the District being offered opportunities to camp in the garden or make indoor dens; parents, siblings and pets joining the adventure. It is amazing how many activities were able to be offered virtually: scavenger hunts, cooking over tins, 'recycled robots', microwave mug cakes, icing competitions, loads of cooking, crafts such as string art fleur-de-lis (the skill in using a hammer and nails) and leafy hedgehogs, shoe cleaning, ironing, quizzes, many different games adapted to the virtual environment, and so much more.

We focussed on well-being, being acutely aware that many Leaders and parents were key workers, trying to juggle these responsibilities with schooling and other children's activities. Some Sections worked together to take the stress from these Leaders, an example being a programme offered via a Group blog. A 'thank you tree' was created outside one HQ, stones/eggs were painted and placed around the community for others to find and enjoy, goodie bags were made for residents in a local Care Home, litter-pick challenges around the community, walking and cycling personal challenges were introduced to ensure young people were getting exercise and fresh air. There was an activity to help Cubs improve their sleeping. Beavers learned about overcoming their monsters and how to talk about their feelings and emotions – who can forget Angry Annie and how to channel energy to be Friendly Freddie!

Another Group has prepared a time capsule which shows what life was like in lockdown; the plan being that in 25 years' time it will be opened.

Badges, Challenge Awards and CSAs were presented virtually, Leader training was introduced via Zoom, the District Cub Christmas 'service' was held via Zoom – we found we could all learn new skills!

East Herts

Dave Pullen, District Commissioner

During the last year in East Herts District, we have kept contact with all Groups through WhatsApp and supplied information to the Groups regarding national and County activities online. In May last year we held our Annual General Meeting and welcomed our new Chairman Michael Millen and thanked the outgoing Chair Joanne Chapman.

With the help of Zoom, many Groups took up the challenges of quizzes, Scouting activities which they could do from home, and camping in gardens which was extremely popular. As restrictions eased towards the end of the year, Groups took full advantage of meeting face to face as much as possible. The Young Mariners Base at Cheshunt was well used along with outdoor activities at the various Group headquarters around the District. In making preparation for face-to-face activities, risk assessments were drawn up and approved by Headquarters and County along with all safety aspects of face masks, sanitiser etc.

I am pleased to report that most of the Groups are now back Scouting, and the programme has opened up to more adventurous activities. We still have GSL and Exec meetings via Zoom which is working very well for communication purposes. The District team is also working well and our search for a new DC still goes on. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all leaders in the District who have maintained contact with their Groups and thank the District team for the hard work they have put in to risk assessments and communications. Onwards and upwards East Herts, Scouting higher and wider.

Elstree and District

James Pugh, District Commissioner

Our founder, Baden-Powell once said, "A Scout is never taken by surprise; he knows exactly what to do when anything unexpected happens.", and I think that this has shown itself to be true, especially in the current climate. I am blown away by the resilience shown by our young people and am truly inspired by the amazing work being done by the dedicated adult volunteers working hard to enable Scouting to continue from home.

It's been great to see the broad range of activities our young people have been enjoying in the Great Indoors from; everything from forensics to pizza making.

Our leaders have been working hard to plan a quality programme even in these challenging times.

Without our leaders, we could not offer such an amazing programme to our young people, and we want to recognise that. It's been great to see the number of leaders over this year that have received their good service and long service awards in recognition of their outstanding commitment and hard work in preparing our young people with Skills for Life.

I look forward to seeing everything that our leaders and young people continue to do as we face ongoing challenges, and see a brighter dawn ahead as restrictions ease, and we slowly work towards finding the 'new normal' and what this means for Scouting.

Harpenden and Wheathampstead

Russell Brooks, District Commissioner

Twice during the first lockdown, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts from across the District stepped up to help our local council by delivering leaflets to every house in the town in order to make sure that every vulnerable person in the District knew of the community support that was available to them from the local Harpenden Cares initiative.

In May 2020, in aid of International Nurses Day and in gratitude for the phenomenal work our NHS staff and volunteers are doing right now caring for COVID-19 patients, Vladi and Peter Kuna from 1st Harpenden launched the Building A Rainbow from Painted Stones fundraising project.

The response from the whole of the District was fantastic with over 500 stones donated in less than a week and raising £675 for the Luton & Dunstable Hospital Charitable Fund. The hospital sent us a letter of thanks and the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire awarded us a Certificate of Recognition.

The District managed to complete its annual Christmas card deliveries around Harpenden and in Wheathampstead, in a socially distanced way, and just in time before the pre-Christmas lockdown.

District managed to keep its camping going through the year, participating in the Northumberland Scouts CampAtHome, the District Virtual Camp and many Group and Section camps-at-home.

Hemel Hempstead

Russ Dyble, District Commissioner

Hemel District have been very busy during lockdown switching to running online weekly sessions instead of running face to face.

The District hosted a virtual camp which welcomed 381 Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers from 13 different groups. There were several themed sessions with lots of different activities for the young people to complete suitable for all ages using simple equipment they had at home including making catapults, marble runs, spaghetti towers, obstacle courses, bug hotels and bird feeders plus loads more. The afternoon including the suggestion of a walk, which many enjoyed. They helped to cook dinner and importantly wash up! This was an essential as some parents were reporting 'wrecked homes' from the earlier activities – a sure sign that the young people were having fun.

During the afternoon as one of the activities, the young people had built dens inside or put up tents in the garden for them to spend the night in. Some showed initiative in where they slept – two youngsters were to be found sleeping on their trampoline.

On Sunday morning some helped cook breakfast using some traditional camp recipes and they finished off with one final activity session, thinking about and showing off their lockdown essentials and a closing ceremony on Zoom.

Hertford

Ian Tycer, District Commissioner

Hertford pretty much followed the same path as other Districts with its variety of Zoom events, with some fabulously creative outdoor meetings when we were allowed.

The highlight for me was a virtual Cub camp, where I managed to persuade my wife, District Secretary, to join me in a tent in our garden for the weekend. All credit is due to the Leaders at 1st Letty Green, the three of whom were awarded with Commissioner's Commendations. They supplied all attendees with a brown bag of goodies including the mug and ingredients for a cake in a mug! So the mug is a reminder of the fun in 2020!!



Hitchin

Tony Hankin, District Commissioner

Hitchin Scouts has maintained an active programme over the past year. Young people and adults have adapted to a mix of online and socially-distanced meetings with activities such as cooking, escape rooms, challenges, badges, surprise guests, virtual hikes, personal trainer sessions and international socialising all taking place. Leaders have been very active in sharing ideas and programmes between Sections and Groups and Young Leaders have assisted in planning, organising and running sessions. 148 top awards were achieved during 2020.

Many Sections were involved with initiatives in the local community, sending cards and letters to care homes at Christmas and during lockdown and two Groups supported the Town Christmas Tree Festival raising funds for local charities. The District organised and ran two well supported virtual sleepovers, with a pirate themed Beaver event and a Harry Potter Cub event.

Letchworth and Baldock

Wendy Tierney, District Commissioner

Well, what a year we have had, but through it all Scouting has continued, and our ever-resourceful leaders took their programme and ran with it online coming up with some exciting activities for all to join in with. Across the sections they have cooked, hiked to the moon, raced around the world, camped in the garden, or living room, taken part in challenges, having great fun with the water challenge and many other exciting things. There have been investitures on Zoom, and awards presented too, with many activity badges also being gained. We have had many leader awards and service awards, congratulations to you all.

With Covid risk assessments approved, face masks, plenty of hand sanitiser and 2m distancing, face-to-face Scouting could resume outdoors, so we lit that fire and got the marshmallows out. Even with the cold and wet some good Scouting fun was had.

Many of our District events were cancelled over the year but the main event was our District camp to celebrate 75 years. We set a competition across District to design our celebration badge, with an additional camp badge if they attended camp. On the date of our anniversary, 1st August 2020, we held a small celebration (all social distancing) with cake at our Scout HQ where we presented

the competition winners with their prize, which was a certificate and a camp blanket with the winning badges sewn on, also their name. The badge was made up of two designs, so we had two winners one Beaver and one Cub. Well done to them both.

Rita our 'Co-ordinator' (our District newsletter) editor has managed to get Co-ordinator out every month through the pandemic which at times has been hard with not much going on within District. Thank you Rita. If you want to see more of what our Groups have been up to through the pandemic go to our website.

I know this has been a hard year for all including the young people but I would like to thank everyone in District for keeping Scouting going, I am sure that with more restrictions being lifted and with the vaccine, more face-to-face Scouting can take place, numbers of young people will start to increase which will mean we need more volunteers to join our Groups to help give these young people #SkillsForLife.

Take care, stay safe and carry-on Scouting.

Mid Herts

Tony Lyall, District Commissioner

What a year 2020 was going to be for Mid Herts! With plans in place for a District Camp in May, Beaver Day in July and Dusk Hikes for the Beavers and Cubs later in the year as well as other activities. There were also three international expeditions planned to Kandersteg in Switzerland, Denmark and Norway/Sweden in the summer which would have seen participation by 103 young people and leaders many of whom would be attending an overseas camp for the first time. Unfortunately, as we now know these were not to be.

The year started with so much promise, our bi-annual Cub and Scout Swimming Gala in January attracted entries from more Sections/Groups than in previous years and was then followed a couple of months later with the annual Mid Herts Night Hike which as usual was well supported.

And then, within days of the Night Hike, came lockdown... not to be deterred sections soon adapted to the concept of running a virtual programme week on week, coming up with new and imaginative ideas that could be delivered via Zoom. Parents even got in on the act by joining in with the younger sections which was fabulous to see. District-wide St. Georges Day celebrations, the AGM and Remembrance Day service were all held virtually while at County level

our Beavers joined Beavers in Dens which was held the same weekend as the Great Indoor Weekend which was attended by some of our other sections. Once restrictions were eased such that we could resume face to face Scouting most were quick to make the most of the freedom of being outdoors and away from the small screen with campfires being the most popular activity.

All the Leaders, adult helpers and parents right across the District have shown so much initiative and been so supportive during this difficult year, so a massive thank you to you all, you are awesome.

Potters Bar and District

Kerry Clark, District Commissioner

Another trying year for a lot of people, for a lot of different reasons. I'm pleased to report, where possible, our amazing adult volunteers have done as much as possible to safely give the local young people a Scouting experience.

Challenges, yes there have been a few, leaders no longer available, venues that we can't access, and a lot of rules we have worked hard to meet, but Scouting brings out the best in people. We have seen lots of meetings in parks and open spaces and Groups that have space generously sharing with those who don't. We've seen Groups develop the outsides of their huts so much they don't use the insides, and young people happily out in weather that they wouldn't have in 2019. Most of all smiling young people, learning and developing.

Rickmansworth and Chorleywood

Julia Pich, District Commissioner

It goes without saying that this was a very different experience of Scouting for everyone no matter their section. One of the real highlights for us was that we had our first Medal for Meritorious Conduct awarded in the District. Unfortunately, it had to be done over Zoom but this meant that far-flung relatives could be part of the celebrations. Congratulations to Rhys from 1st Chorleywood!

During the Autumn term we were incredibly lucky to have been able to squeeze in two of our District staples. Nimrod, an incident hiking competition, and the sailing regatta which gave 50 young people a taste of normality before the November lockdown.

Despite not being able to show our respects in the usual way several of our Groups made beautiful Remembrance displays in the local area.

We also had an exciting international connection where Chorleywood Scouts had a meeting with Dutch Scouts from Alkmaar, Northern Holland.

Last but not least over the Easter weekend we ran a Virtual Easter Egg Hunt in collaboration with Watford North Scouts. We had 35 teams take part from across the UK and all sections.

We like to hope that every virtual activity from cooking, escape rooms, and scavenger hunts has made our District's year a little bit brighter.

Royston

Carole Rhind, District Commissioner

It has been brilliant to witness the great things that have been achieved across Royston District throughout a difficult year. Leaders have come up with some amazing activities on Zoom, which have given our young people some fun-filled evenings.

They have held virtual camps, virtual campfires and linked up with Scouts from Canada and America. We have had birds of prey demonstrations and learnt circus skills. Most popular were the cooking challenges throughout the District. We also had challenges to grow the tallest sunflowers, the longest runner bean and biggest tomato.

The District was challenged to walk from Lands End to John O'Groats during March, and succeeded in walking to Russia! Every Beaver, Cub, Scout, Explorer & Leader aimed to walk at least 30 miles. We totalled over 5,000!

We're delighted to say that a large number managed to achieve their Chief Scout's Awards during this time.

Scouting has brought everyone together and it has been great to see everyone having fun.

St Albans

Annette Payne, District Commissioner

Well who would think that one year on we would still be encouraging our young people to be on their screens!

Zoom became our friend with activities, camps as well as meetings facilitated by the software. Even Gang Show this year was a live stream! We camped in our gardens, under tables and blankets, “cooked alonged” on Zoom and hiked both to the moon and around the globe. We have collected food for food banks, raised money for numerous charities, sent cards and care packages to care homes, and made PPE for the NHS. Chief Scout’s Awards have been earned and even a Queen’s Scout Award completed. All without seeing each other face to face!

If that doesn’t show the resilience of our volunteers and young people I am not sure what does. As we now go back to face to face activities we reflect on a year when we were tested in a way we could never have imagined but have risen to the challenge thanks to all of our members. Time to start afresh with old favourites and new ideas.

Stevenage

Kerry Hall, District Commissioner

Simon Speller our District Commissioner stood down last year. I would like to thank Simon for all the hard work and support he has given Stevenage Scouting over the years. I have a hard act to follow. In Stevenage from when lockdown happened in 2020, most of the Groups have been meeting via Zoom. They have been continuing their badge work by cooking and making things. One Group even completed their entertainers badge with the young people learning their lines, making their props and costumes, then parents videoed them. The leaders put it all together and held the play on Zoom.

We held our St George’s Day on Zoom. We had an activity programme in which our Cubs and Beavers enjoyed Art and Magic Workshops. They made biscuits with Shiny Kitchen and completed exercise sessions. The Scouts and Explorer sessions began with presentation from a Paralympian who talked about his disabilities and his sport. They made a Carbonara, had a Birds of Prey Talk and finished off with an exercise session. In the afternoon everyone came together, on Zoom of course, where we all renewed our promises. We had great feedback from the young people, Leaders and Parents with the event a success and enjoyed by one and all.

All the groups are now back to meeting face-to-face. I would like to thank the leaders for continuing with fantastic ideas for their Groups to keep Scouting going through out lockdown.

Ware and District

Pat Horridge, District Commissioner

It has been really interesting and heartening seeing how our local Scouting has adapted during this pandemic. Nobody expected the last 14 months or so to be any different to the years before and then the whole world changed.

Scouting is a very tactile and hands-on experience with so much of what we do done outdoors doing physical adventurous activities and circumstances made that impossible. And like many Districts we had a significant number of leaders unable to deliver Scouting using remote means. For some they just couldn’t deal with the technology. But for every leader who wasn’t able to continue delivering Scouting we had two who were determined to find solutions. And find them they did. Some concentrated on their Chief Scout’s Awards and adapted the requirements to this remote delivery. Others found new fun ways to engage our young people and we soon found how valuable that was. For many of our Beavers, Cubs and probably less so Scouts and Explorers, they really missed their friends and peers and their regular Beaver or Cub session allowed them all to meet up and have fun. The best remote Zoom sessions had plenty of silly fun in them. Just what you need when the world looks so bleak.

We had virtual camps and virtual hikes and when there was a window of opportunity to re-engage in face-to-face Scouting those leaders stepped up to find solutions to the limitations the pandemic rules imposed on us. Scouting is all about facing challenges and overcoming them making the best of what we’ve got and valuing friendship. The pandemic has proved in our District that we have plenty of leaders who have those qualities and recognise the importance of Scouting to our young people.

Of course we lost some members and we lost some leaders (mainly those that would have drifted away in time anyway) but it’s left us with a stronger, more determined, core that we can build on. And build is what we are doing. We see new enquiries every week with parents wanting their children to join our adventure. Our next challenge is to bring those parents along for their own adventure.

Watford North

Dave Collette, District Commissioner

Watopoly has been a great tradition in Watford North for several years. Not wanting to miss the opportunity we ran a virtual version of our Monopoly run from December to April using Google forms and maps. We had 30 teams from across Hertfordshire take part. Our overall winners were Excalibur Explorers from our neighbours in Watford South Scouts. We also had an adult and a Scout team from Rickmasworth and Chorleywood who topped their respective sections.

The virtual meetings on Zoom were all well attended providing our young people with some much-needed structure and variety of new activities during the prolonged periods indoors.

Some of our more notable and exciting undertakings of the past few months both virtually and face-to-face included; Virtual Halloween Party, Backwoods Cooking, Virtual Games Evening, Italian Evening with Pizza Making, Virtual Challenge Evening, Virtual Christmas Party, Essex Reptile Encounters, Chinese New Year, Pancake Night, Gardener Badge Evening, Easter Craft and Cooking. And since lockdown has eased a Leavesden Country Park Hike, some Tent Pitching and Wide Games.

Throughout the year our young people have been able to complete a host of badge-work and awards. Some have used the time indoors during the lockdowns to undertake the completion of badges and awards around their own personal interests and hobbies.

Scouts had hoped to embark on their Annual Summer Scout Camp last year, but this wasn't possible and unfortunately they had to cancel it. Some of the leaders came together to create a week-long Virtual Camp, which was enjoyed by over 20 of our members. Our leaders worked very hard to create activities such as route planning, flag making and even virtual campfires! The week was enjoyed by all participants.

Watford South

Ian Leach, District Commissioner

This year has been out of the ordinary for all, but our leaders and young people have shown their resilience and mucked in to help others. 14th Bushey and Oxhey Sea Scouts and Excalibur Explorers made facemasks and food which they

distributed across the local area.

With face-to-face meetings suspended our Groups took to Zoom to run sessions. Amongst the District the most popular Zoom activity was cooking with a variety of different methods from tin can popcorn to microwave mug cakes. Some Groups even got their young people to cook family dinners with an international theme of course.

West Herts

Samantha Rayment, District Commissioner

In West Herts, like all other Districts, this year has been all about keeping everyone as safe as possible whilst adult volunteers - across all roles - have demonstrated commendable resilience in keeping the spirit and energy going through the challenges 2020-2021 has provided. Across the changeable circumstances this year, the District has seen over 50 individual work streams across all Groups in risk assessing and returning various forms of Scouting face-to-face.

The District has suffered loss this year in a number of senses - volunteers who have been unable to continue, tragedy with the impact of the pandemic and changes to long-term programme plans and hopes from the young people.

With this in mind, what is truly remarkable is that despite these challenges West Herts Groups and section adult volunteers and young people alike have, throughout, demonstrated amazing flexibility and vitality. We have camped in private gardens across Zoom, undertaken badge work remotely, and attended national events from the comfort of living rooms. Going into 2021 Duke of Edinburgh and Young Leader training has also recommenced to help secure longer-term inclusion and engagement where possible.

In recognition of all of these efforts, this year we have awarded over 80 awards across the District to our volunteers - from Commissioner and Acorn awards recognising many who have gone above and beyond, recognising long service of 5 years and more.

History & Heritage

Frank Brittain, County Archivist

As with every other aspect of Scouting, the History and Heritage Team have faced the challenges resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic but, with true Scouting resilience, have managed to conduct business (almost) as usual. The biggest hardship was not being able to visit Well End Activity Centre, where the archives and valuable artifacts are safely stored, and where many of the Team's research projects are managed.

Thanks to the coordinating efforts of the County Historian, Frank Brittain, the Team have kept in regular touch with each other and the Monthly Newsletter has been prepared and published as usual. The newsletter is circulated as part of the Headlines communication to all County leaders.

Original plans for the year had included a visit to the home of former Deputy then Chief Scout Lord Somers (who succeeded B-P in 1941) and invitations for Frank to visit and speak to various Groups in Hertfordshire but these had to be postponed. In addition, it has not been possible to welcome visitors to Well End but the Team have been able to continue to answer enquiries from Groups and Districts about their history and give advice about how and where to conduct research. Legacy collections, and other valuable donations, continue to be received but have been stored temporarily in Frank's study at home as have numerous press articles published during the pandemic. Plans have been made to transfer these to the Archive Cabin freeing up much needed space for Frank.

The history of our Movement provides many excellent examples of how Scouts have risen to the challenges caused by hardship and adversity. For example, during both World Wars Groups throughout the Country collected herbs and other natural materials to be turned into medicines, much needed by troops and the general population, due to the shortage of pharmaceutically produced products. The History & Heritage Team is proud to have followed in this fine tradition and looks forward to again welcoming visitors at Well End and attending local Group meetings to inform our young members about our rich Scouting heritage.

Frank Brittain is a prolific photographer and the County Archives contain many interesting historic images, a couple of which are shown on this page. The Team look forward to being able to welcome you back to the County Scout Museum in the coming months.

Activity Centres

Mark Jefferson, APMC Chairman

2020 was a year when the joyous sound of young people in the outdoors was replaced by eerie silence, occasionally broken by the drone of tractors keeping the grass ever ready for their return.

Many valued and long serving members of staff left us, with a small, focussed team left to maintain our estate. Our thanks go out to the remaining centre's team for their continued efforts, supported over a long summer by our International Volunteers – who had a very different experience from that which they signed up for.

Just as Scouts moved to Zoom, so did our Service Teams and Activity Staff, keeping in touch and retaining the bond that brings the magic to our campers experiences with us.

We look forward to the time when we can see our meadows and woodlands full of young people again, as we emerge from our long and unexpected hibernation.

Our Centres



The Secret of Change

Mike Shurety, County Chairman

The last year has been one of the most difficult in the long history of Hertfordshire Scouts. The pandemic has changed many aspects of our lives, some only temporarily but others for a lifetime. It has made us look at the challenges we face, both personally and in Scouting, in a fresh and different way.

For an organisation that is primarily focused on bringing people together we are used to doing this on a face-to-face basis. Managing our meetings in a practical and hands-on manner, the lockdowns disrupted the way we had traditionally delivered Scouting and necessitated a radical rethink. Financially too, like many other organisations, we were hit particularly hard as, normally, around 78% of our income is generated through our Activity Centres. When our Centres closed on 17 March 2020 this vital income stream was cut off and we had to respond quickly and adopt a different approach in order to continue as a financially viable concern.

Socrates said “The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new”. Fortunately, Scouting has always readily adapted to change and, drawing on our institutionalised resourcefulness, we continued to deliver an inspiring and innovative programme to our young people as well as effectively discharging our financial and constitutional obligations.

The last year has taught us the value of online events and it is a legacy we shall carry forward when we eventually arrive at the ‘new normal’. We have also learnt the value of building versatile teams with varied, yet complementary, skills. We have particularly benefitted from this at County level and it is a pattern I see reflected across the entire County.

Teamwork is our strength and together I am confident that we will continue to navigate through this period successfully, continue to make changes when needed, and come out of it stronger than ever.

I would like to thank you all for your continued support and for the inspiring way in which you have readily embraced the change necessary to keep Scouting going throughout Hertfordshire. Our members make us who we are and I am constantly in awe of all they do. I feel sure we are reaching a significant turning point and that the year ahead will be brighter with much to look forward to and achieve.



**Thank you to
every one of our
volunteers at
Hertfordshire
Scouts**



Scouts
Hertfordshire

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