

## Explorer Unit AGM Report

The Unit continues to go from strength to strength and we now have 26 Explorers on the list, with more joining in September. The Unit also has a new leader, Daniel Cheney, ex cub, scout and explorer, who is going through his training, and a warranted parent helper in Steve Jackman and have welcomed back Andrew Brember as a parent helper, who along with James Dent and myself now brings the adult contingent up to 5.

The past year has been a busy one, with a wide variety of activities and camps taking place. We have had another White Water rafting session and Scuba Diving session as well as a not so successful weekend Para Gliding, which was affected by the weather. Three of the Unit took part in the first District Survival Camp, and hopefully more will take part on the next one. Other activities have included favourites such as Pioneering, Cinema bowling and Quazar, and we have had some very successful camps this year, notable our Summer Camp in Denmark. 15 Explorer Scouts and four leaders went to Hounsodde Scout Camp in Denmark, on their first ever camp abroad. The idea for the camp came after we met a group of Danish Scouts the previous year and they invited us over. We flew out of Stanstead with Ryan Air and arrived at the camp by 4pm but were then faced with a 2km walk with all our kit, as the camp was very isolated out on a spit of land in the Baltic Sea. It was always our intention to cook all our meals on open fires, since they do not use gas over there but we didn't realise just how basic it was going to be and credit goes to our GSL Peter Cheney for managing to feed 19 people 3 times a day for the week – especially when we couldn't even work out the names of the food we were eating! Baked beans are unheard of, and we were not prepared for the amount of mosquitoes we encountered. Counting the bites each morning became a camp fascination, with some of the Explorers getting up to 180 by the end of the week!

The Explorers took part in a wide range of activities such as Canoeing, Kayaking, Swimming and Sailing (since we were surrounded by water), as well as Archery, Viking Axe Throwing, Orienteering, Prehistoric Crafts, and we even had to build our own fun fair from wooden poles and rope! The Unit were fantastic ambassadors, joining in with Danish and German Scouts and made very good friends, with a few tearful eyes when we left. Six of the Unit were invested while we were over there, and not many Explorers can say that they were invested in the middle of a Danish Scout camp surrounded by mosquitoes!

We have also attended the annual Winter camp as a joint camp with the scouts, as well as the dedicated Explorer only Gilwell 24 camp – where activities go on throughout the night from Saturday 9am to Sunday 9am – a test of endurance! Along with this some of the Unit took part in two Boyd Field Environmental camps, where we have taken over responsibility to look after our own area behind the Lake. The Unit also took part in expeditions for the Platinum and Diamond Awards. These camps and activities have allowed a number of our Unit to gain either the Platinum Award and in some cases their Diamond Award. Congratulations go to Platinum holders Ben Cave, Rhian Davies, Sophie Hilditch, and James Jackman, and Diamond holders Chris Tan, Chris Way, and Darren Way.

Recently, Daniel Cheney and myself took part in our Mountain Leader Training course and Chris Tan and James Jackman took part in an Introduction to Mountain Walkin up in Lochearnhead in Scotland. Hopefully more will go next year for a fantastic week in the Scottish Highlands climbing and walking over 1000 metres high.

And finally – a grateful thanks go out to all the parents who support us each week – again without your help with transport we would not be able to be as successful.

Steve Davies  
Explorer Unit Leader