

Spring 2010 Ajax News!



Welcome to the spring edition of **Ajax News!** After a long cold winter, packed with traditional Scouting activities, we are now looking forward to boating, camping, regattas and lots of other outdoor activities. To support all of this, we will all be asked to help with fundraising events over the next few months. Please give your time as generously as possible and take the opportunity to make some new friends along the way! **Susan Hawkings, Editor**

Esher May Fair

We really need your help over the next few weeks when you will be asked to bring to the WAC items needed for the Fair including books, toys, bric-a-brac, bottles for the tombola and cakes for the tea tent – plus new, unwanted items for the auction or items or gift vouchers that you can obtain from work and that we can also auction. This is our most important fund raising event and we really need your help. Look out for the leaflets that should come home each week requesting items to be brought the following week.

Explorer Winter Training Activities

We took full advantage of the winter weather in the early part of the year, starting with an energetic snowball fight at our first muster in January.



In February we moved indoors to practice our Eskimo roll techniques at the Moore Lane school pool and as you can see we are now prepared for some fairly extreme manoeuvres!

We braved the cold once more for an outdoor evening swim at

the Hampton Outdoor Pool, an eerie experience with steam rising from the heated water making it feel like swimming in thick fog. Despite a very fast flow, we finally got on to the river in early March, thanks to the three tonne tug boat RN95 which was on loan to Ajax and which enabled us to practice our navigation.

Indoor activities have included helping with the planning for our Troop and Explorer summer camp in Holland (not a responsibility for the faint hearted!) plus further Young Leader training for some of our newer members. This is designed to help youngsters gain the confidence to take on leadership roles as part of their Duke of Edinburgh training.

Food has also been a popular feature, with pancakes to help warm us up on Shrove 'Wednesday', then a

Chinese takeaway and finally a Chicken Biryani, all of which means we're now ready to compete in the District 'Ready, Steady, Cook!' competition in a few days! We're now looking forward to the warmer weather, hopefully starting this coming weekend, when we'll all be sailing at Chichester Harbour.

Out In The Wilds

The Troop highlight of the year to date has definitely been our Winter Weekend Camp at Broadstone Warren in Sussex. 17 Scouts attended and we were extremely lucky with the weather. As in the past, we stayed in a log cabin on this picturesque Scout camp site in the heart of the Ashdown Forest. With a huge inglenook fireplace and a log fire that we kept going all weekend, we were as warm as toast.



Activities included abseiling, crate stacking, pioneering, potholing and orienteering. A great weekend away with fun for all and a something we plan once again to make an annual Troop event.

Other recent Troop activities have included first aid training, nautical skills and most recently camp-fire building and backwoods cooking.

Congratulations to Harri Holmes-Davies for coming second in the District Cross Country Race, proving that Sea Scouts can do just as well on land as we do on the water!

Over the Easter holidays our older Scouts had the opportunity for a weekend of power boat training and this will shortly lead to the award of some RYA Powerboat certificates.

We have just started a series of visits to the Esher Fire Station which will enable our younger Scouts to obtain their Fire Safety badge and now that the clocks have gone forward we are once again boating on Thursday evenings as well as Saturdays!

Mayor Visits Ajax Sea Scouts

The Sunday before last, Ajax was visited by the Mayor of Elmbridge, Councillor James Vickers, accompanied by his wife the Mayoress. The occasion was a Royal Yachting Association first aid course run by Ajax for 36 Scouting adults from all around the county.



Commenting on the course Councillor Vickers said: "I believe that everyone should find the time to attend a first aid course. Just learning how to keep someone's heart pumping until the ambulance arrives can save a life and it's incredibly easy once you have been taught." The mayor then gave a demonstration of how it should be done and was awarded full marks by the course instructor, our very own Mark Faulkner.

Councillor Vickers now has something of a connection with Ajax – he has twice performed the opening ceremony for the Esher May Fair and most recently he presented six Ajax Beaver Scouts with their Chief Scout's Bronze Awards in the council chamber. The Mayor's ACE (Assisting Communities in Elmbridge) charitable fund has also recently provided Ajax with a grant to help with costly repairs to our heating system for which we are most grateful.

Cubs Fit For Any Challenge!

Like almost everyone else, our Cubs began the year by focussing on fitness. For our Fitness Challenge we regularly measured how we were doing with our press-ups, sit-ups, skipping and running. We all "did our best" and some showed considerable improvement over the weeks except for one or two Leaders who looked worse for wear after just a few press-ups! For the Scientist badge we learned about pinhole cameras, magnetised a pin to make a compass and grew bean shoots. The highlight for our Cubs was the evening that we lit a number of Chinese lanterns and nearly set fire to the surrounding trees!

On a cold Sunday in February a few brave Cubs entered the District Cross Country Run. Our own Luke Mace was in top form and won the Cub event by a huge margin – well done Luke!

For Shrove Tuesday (OK we were a week early) we made (and ate) some tasty pancakes. It was a lot of fun and rather less messy than usual!

After half term we focused on Water Safety and visited the Xcel pool to work on our swimming badges. We have some very able swimmers who will soon be moving up to the Troop where they will have access to an exciting program of water activities. They can't wait!

Most recently we have been working on the Local Knowledge badge. We have explored the local area and have studied maps of Thames Ditton in 1880, 1930, 1950 and the present day to see how our area has changed.

We finished before Easter with the Egg Challenge, where the Cubs are given a raw egg and some craft material to build protection for the egg. Eggs are then dropped from a potentially disastrous 2m height, and any teams whose egg survives intact are judged the winners. Noisy, messy and great fun, this challenge also has the benefit of scrambled eggs for tea!

Creative Beavers Show Off Modelling Skills

The Creative Challenge has been this year's initial theme for our Beavers, starting with an evening building paper aeroplanes and followed by craft and junk modelling as well as tie-dyeing. As you can see below, we were all very proud of our creations.



The highlight of January was the District Beaver Party. We watched a production of Alice in Wonderland and took part in a number of creative and physical activities based on the play.

During February we started our Global Challenge, with an Indian food tasting. The crispy papadoms were very popular, but the vegetable dhal was not to everyone's taste!

March began with a visit to the Elmbridge Council Chamber to meet the Mayor, Councillor James Vickers. As well as giving the Beavers a very interesting talk about local democracy, the Mayor, also presented six Bronze Chief Scout's Awards. Congratulations to all.

For Mother's day, mothers or grandmothers were invited to the WAC for tea and cakes served to them by them by the Beavers. Most recently, with lighter evenings we have embarked on our Outdoor Challenge starting with an evening at Oxshott Heath, practicing our tracking skills by following a flour trail.