

73rd Reading (Park) Scout Group

Winter 2016 Newsletter

Welcome to the 73rd Reading (Park) Scout Group newsletter for Winter 2016.

We wish all of our young people and their parents a fun and festive Christmas break.

Our annual Christmas party for the older members of our community takes place on 11 December from 3pm to 4.30pm for our guests. Thanks to everyone who has offered help already. We still require raffle prizes and help from parents on the day to provide a lift service to collect and take home guests, if you can help please contact Sheena (smaso@hotmail.co.uk) or your parent representative (more details below).

There is still availability for Beavers on Wednesdays. The sessions run from 5.15 to 6.30. If you know of any parents of young people who would be interested, contact Simon (email).

The Group is currently updating its Gift Aid details for parents. We will be asking all parents to sign reregister their gift aid so that we can claim back gift aid for the past few years. This is a fantastic way of raising extra funds for our young people and will make a significant difference to the work we do. So please do look out of the forms and please send them back as soon as you can.

The Group Executive is still looking for a parent to represent the Beavers' section. The time commitment is small; please read more below and email Sheena to volunteer.

If you **want to contribute to the next newsletter**, please send items to Nathan Helsby. (nathan_helsby@hotmail.com).

Upcoming events

Gift Day Parade Service on 11 December 2016, 10.30am.

Scout Winter Camp on 17-19 February 2017

Group camp on 26-29 May 2017 – this is our first group camp for a while where Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and explorers will all camp together. On the last day of camp, all families are welcome to join the group for lunch before taking their children home. A great opportunity to meet the leaders, adult helpers, other parents and find out more about our Scouting group. So please return your camp forms and £10 deposit asap.

Senior Citizen's Christmas Party – Sunday 11th December 2016

Preparations for the Annual Senior Citizen's Party are well underway, an important event for our Scout group to contribute to the wider local community. Once again the Scout & Explorer sections are hosting



the party, so we hope as many Scouts and Explorers are able to come along on the day to serve a festive tea to our guests, provide entertainment by joining in with festive and camp songs and run the raffle. Young people will be required to help set up from around 1.45pm and clear away until around 5pm

In addition, we are looking for help from parents by donating a small raffle prize before the party (please hand all donations to section leaders any time from now until the 8th December 2016). And on the day of the party we are looking for parents to help by transporting our guests by car from home to/from the party. If you can help please send an e-mail to Sheena at smaso@hotmail.co.uk indicating what help you are able to offer and your contact details.

Thank you to families for making a contribution along with your subs payments to meet the cost of hosting the party and any donations and offers of help so far.

News from the Sections

District swimming gala

This term, over 20 Cubs and Scouts represented their Sections and Group for an aquatic showdown of epic proportions at the recent District Swimming Gala. After much splashing, cheering and stopwatch gazing, our amazing young people racked up a whopping number of points; we were represented in the majority of the finals and won a number of these accompanied by second places too. This meant we retained the Cub Trophy, retained the Group Relay, won the Scout Trophy and retained the Overall Trophy. A fantastic clean sweep and a huge well done to all those who participated.



Successful swimmers at the annual gala

Huntley Beavers (Monday) and Palmer Beavers (Wednesday)

This term has been a very lively one for Huntley Beavers, with many new faces joining us taking us up to 20 Beavers, almost double our number from before the summer! Beavers in both groups have continued working towards the new Challenge badges brought in recently, getting to the My Adventure challenge for the first time. At least 1 Beaver has earned all 6 of the new Challenge badges since the Scout association updated them, a great achievement! As part of being adventurous, the Beavers have been Dragon Boating on the River Thames at Wokingham Waterside Centre, indoor rock climbing again at Queen Anne's School in Caversham and running the brand new obstacle course at Paddicks Patch. Our Night Hike into Palmer Park to view the Supermoon in November was sadly affected by cloud cover - typical of the British weather.



Beavers Dragon Boating on the River

Cubs

This term the Cubs have been working on their Local Knowledge badge. This has involved a walk through Reading Town centre learning about the history of some of the famous landmarks; identifying them on a map; hearing from someone who works to help the local community and designing their own Coats of Arms. We've considered water as part of The Millions Hands Project and jumped in water in preparation for the District Swimming Gala. We have entered a team again this year and aim to retain our 3 trophies for the Group.

We have our annual Christmas Party scheduled for the end of the term with an extra twist as it is the end of the Centenary Year of Cub Scouting.

Scouts

Braving the cold, our scouts tackled an exciting and varied Autumn Camp this term. It was back to basics with no gas cookers or marquees! With only an open fire to cook on, the scouts learned how to poach an egg in an orange, build structures to help them live out in the woods, and - given the time of year - carve pumpkins that would scare any passers-by into thinking twice before entering our camping area. This term we've also welcomed new leader Becky Harvey, and our scouts have earned a whopping 15 badges. Now would be a good time to teach them how to sew.

Explorers

During the Summer East Reading Explorers attended Roihu, a Jamboree in Finland. This was an international camp with over 16,000 participants. We camped in the forests of southern Finland side by side with a local scout unit and enjoyed a lot of great scouting activities with scouts from around the world such as paddle boarding, Escape room, Hiking, Climbing a giant tree house.... the list goes on.



During the autumn term the explorers have carried on their tradition of boardgaming, hiking and food-related evenings. We have also competed in the Surrey County Scoutshoot competition and completed our fourth session of conservation at the Loddon Nature Reserve in Twyford. Towards the end of the year we have our first District explorer camp with units from around Reading and will also be helping at the annual Senior Citizens Christmas Party held at Park Church.

News from the Executive

The Executive are the trustees of the Scout Group who oversee the running and financial management of the Group, ensuring that we continue to support the activities of the young people in a safe and sustainable manner.

Parent representative vacancy

There are currently three Parent Representatives on the Executive: Nathan Helsby (Cubs), Karen Close (Explorers), and Louise Sutton (Scouts). There is currently a vacancy for a Beaver parent representative. This is a great opportunity to input into the Group's activities and represent the parent voice; the time commitment is a 1-2 hour meeting two to three times a term. If you are interested, please contact Sheena (smaso@hotmail.co.uk), the Secretary to the Executive, in the first instance.

Park Church news

73rd Reading Scout Group has been associated with Park Church for over 80 years. The association is of great benefit to our group in many ways. From a practical point of view the church provides us with vital facilities such as a variety of halls to hold our meetings; our own scout room with clean, dry storage for our equipment; as well as use of the excellent new kitchen.

Remembrance Parade

Thank you to all the young people and parents who attended the Remembrance service in November. At the service, we have traditionally remembered those men from Park Church who died in the first and second world wars. This year we remembered those who died in the Second World War, including Philip Short, whose brother still attends our church. Philip's father is particularly remembered for setting up the 73rd Reading (Park) Scout Group at the Church and it was so very fitting that so many young people and leaders were there to attend the service. Listen to his story from the viewpoint of his fiancé [here](#).

Families are welcome at all our Christmas services. In particular, on 18 December, not only will there be the morning service, we will also have the Living Nativity and carol singing (from 2.45pm), where we walk through the streets of Reading, singing carols as we go. The day will finish with carols by candlelight at 6pm. Please see our website www.parkurc.org.uk for more details.