



South West Notts District Explorer Scouts Annual Report 2004/05

Our second year of Explorer Scouting in the District has gone by even more quickly than the first, and I'm very pleased to report on the continued success that we have enjoyed over the last 12 months.

On the administrative side, we have established the District Explorer Scout Executive Committee as a sub-committee of the District Exec. This team consists of the District Chair, the District Secretary, DC, Deputy DC, DESC, an ESL (on a rotation basis) and 2 Explorer Scouts (again, on a rotation basis). Its purpose is to oversee the finances of the Explorer Section, provide fundraising support and help with adult recruitment.

District Activities

Ian Rawson kindly ran a navigation training evening for 8 of our explorer scouts (plus a few leaders who needed some revision!), which was followed by a day in Derbyshire doing some micro-navigation exercises to improve participants' skills, and a few months later by some night navigation, again in Derbyshire. The only mishap that night was the DESC tripping over a rock and injuring a few ribs!

The Explorers ran the 8th Annual District Plant Sale at 6th Beeston's HQ in May, raising £1100, which was split between units according to the effort that their members put in. As I write this report, plans are well underway for the 2005 sale, which will hopefully be equally successful.

A successful Water Activities weekend was held on Barton Island in July. The event included a barbecue, some fun and games, and a sleepover. A dozen Explorers had a go at canoeing, sailing and power-boating.

The bar at the District Fireworks Display made £609 profit for Explorer Scouts. Also in November, members of Eclipse Scout Network organised a nighttime Jailbreak event at Walesby, which was won by a combined SESU/Trojan team.

In January, we were very pleased to find that our District Census returns showed an increase in membership of a FANTASTIC 37% on last year, bringing the total Explorer Scout membership to 48.

Magellan Explorer Scout Unit

Summer Camp was held at Gradbach campsite and concentrated on scouting skills. During a night hike on the camp the whole group managed to get completely lost after being within 10 yards of the checkpoint! However, they managed to locate exactly where they were and get back on course, albeit a little later than scheduled. This was down to the excellent navigation skills of members of the group who had been completing their Silver Duke of Edinburgh award. We did a number of expeditions over the year and the group achieved a level of skill that overwhelmed the assessors. The group is now completing the work and is hoping to get presented with the Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award and the Chief Scout's Diamond Award.

As well as summer camp we also attempted to organise two Camping Barn weekends. Unfortunately on both occasions we were unable to go on the weekends due to logistic problems involving transport - not having any and being knocked over by it being the main reasons! Hopefully we will be able to get a barn weekend organised and actually go on it in the near future.

Magellan was one of the main supporters of the district Garden Sale and helped with potting up plants and running the event over the weekend of the sale. We also "grew" the large garden sale sign and will be cultivating a different species of sign this year! Watch the side of the hut for more...

Finally, after taking part in County MAD in March, Magellan Explorers managed to come second in the whole county. Next year we hope to improve times and make a strong bid for first place!

Pioneer Explorer Scout Unit

The unit has gone from strength to strength during the last year with 19 members currently. We have had a varied unit programme from bell ringing and food tasting, to talent nights and magic tricks! We planned and organised the 2nd Chilwell Carol Service with a modern day nativity play. All members of the group from Beavers right through to the leaders enjoyed it. We also performed at this year's St George's Day service which also seemed to be successful.

In February, two unit members and Kirsten Rawson joined the trip to Russia. A thoroughly good time was enjoyed by all three. Activities included cross-country skiing, camping out overnight in the Russian winter weather, preparing food over a fire during a day expedition (the wood had to be chopped first!) as well as living with the Russian people for 5 days before returning to enjoy the tourist sites of St Petersburg.



Trojan Explorer Scout Unit

Trojan had a quite year. In July, we went on the Essex jamboree, which everyone thought was very good. In September, Maurice stepped down as ESL and Terry Unwin took out a warrant to lead the unit. Since then, activities have included lots of cooking, laser shooting, a few days out and a weekend camp practise hike for D of E. A team from the unit was joint winner of Jailbreak. Hopefully the coming year will be a bit livelier.

Discovery Water Activities Explorer Scout Unit

ACTIVITIES: This year Discovery have made great advances on the Water Expedition side. Practices for the D of E silver at "Pulling" - rowing to everyone else- have taken place - sometimes with the elements against the Explorers. The final Expedition is taking place at the end of May 2005, from Beeston to Leicestershire and back. The Unit is grateful for the support that is provided by the 2nd Beeston Sea Scout Group. Also the Explorers have been taking a lead in qualifying for the "Rope leaders" award, which enables them to climb in pairs at a designated Climbing Centre. Regular Camping takes place in the Season.

SERVICE: Discovery have strengthened the relationship with Trent Lock Scout Activity Centre where they have become valued members of the Service Crew. They attend every six weeks to help with Campers and with Canoeing and Sailing. Four of the Explorers are also helping in some form or other as Young Leaders - two with Sea Scouts, one with Cubs and one with Beavers. Some training has taken place, however two are waiting for module A and two need the further modules.

QUALIFICATIONS: This year Discovery have improved qualifications in Sailing (Level 2 achieved by 2 Explorers) and Kayaking (BCU 4-star achieved by 2 Explorers). Further qualifications are expected soon when courses and assessments allow.

EQUIPMENT: An aim of the Unit is to use the District Canoes that are in storage. Help may be needed in getting them certificated and ready for use.

Discovery are a lively set of Explorers who enjoy their Scouting and wear out their Leader!

Stapleford Explorer Scout Unit

Mel Johnson was not able to get to many meetings this year, so the unit was supported for most of the year by the DESC. As the summer approached, a number of those who had joined the unit initially were not able to attend many meetings because of other commitments and looming exams etc

Activities during the year included quizzes, barbeques, volleyball, a bike ride, indoor climbing, and vegetable racing (!). The unit also provided marshals for the Great Notts Bike Ride on 27th June and most of the unit attended the Salvation Army International camp in Norway in late July.

A significant proportion of the unit left in September. The four remaining members of the unit planned and completed their D of E Silver qualifying expedition in October.

Sadly, with dwindling numbers and no new members coming through from the local groups (despite the best efforts of the remaining members), the decision was taken in December to suspend the unit. We hope to re-open it as and when there are sufficient numbers of 14-year-old scouts coming from the Stapleford troops.

Young Leader Training

The number of Explorer Scouts working as Young Leaders has increased over the year, with Beavers, Cubs and Scouts all being assisted over a variety of Groups. Unfortunately due to lack of resources, no training events took place during the year, however, Anne Linsdell has now passed the District Training Manager duties to County so hopefully this will be resolved during the coming year. In the meantime, GSLs and Scouters in Charge are asked to let Anne know if they have any Young Leader working within their Group.

And Finally....

Congratulations to Kirsten who has been selected to lead the Nottinghamshire contingent going to the 2007 World Jamboree. We're all very proud of her!

I would like to end by expressing my sincere thanks to everyone who has supported Explorer Scouting in South West Notts during 2004/05 – especially to all the leaders and helpers who put on such a great programme of activities for our young members and to parents and friends who support them. Special thanks go to my wife, Carmel - her support and encouragement has helped keep me going through some difficult times over the last year.