



March 2025

GSL's Update



I can't quite believe that we are in March already. But, already, our Beavers have attended the District Beaver Party and the Cubs have attended the District Quiz.

However, a brief reflection on last term.

Charity Fund Raising

The sections were involved in thinking of others in the run up to Christmas. The young people decided to raise monies for the following charities:

- **Scouts - £430** - Split between two Scout chosen Charities; Princess Alice Hospice and International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- **Cubs: £543** - To Shooting Stars Children's Hospice

I am always impressed by the choice of charities and the determination and effort put into raising funds for others.

I was especially proud of the way in which the whole of the Scout Group attended the Village Remembrance Parade in November. All sections of the Group were respectful of the service and the meaning of remembrance and I am sure that the people in attendance could not fail to be impressed by our young people and they were a credit to their leaders. The Band certainly make a difference to such an occasion, and it is great that the whole of the Group see the Band marching.

The Band have their Annual Concert at Holy Trinity Church of 29th March, you can be assured of a great evening's entertainment.

My thanks to all of the families who donated items and people who helped making crackers or working on the stall at the Claygate lights, in addition the Explorer Scouts and their leaders ran a BBQ, selling sausages and burgers from the Game Larder. It seemed to have a never-ending queue which only subsided when it was time to go home. The Group made £2,500 across the event which was very welcome boost to our funds.

Now we are into this term welcoming new members and holding our going up ceremony and awards. Well done everyone. The Scouts had a very Frosty night for their Camp and built a wonderful going up ceremony item, which I am sure the young people will remember.

There is a diary update within the newsletter, however, I would point you at the weekend of 26th – 27th April. On the Saturday we have a Jumble Sale, the Claygate Clean up and presenting at the Claygate get involved event. The Sunday is St George's Day Parade a day when nationally Scouts reaffirm their Scout Promise.



Beaver Cheer & District Party

Bringing Beavers' Cheer to Hamilton Nursing Home

Since one of our previous Group Vice-Presidents, Graham Gibbs, moved to Hamilton Nursing Home in Surbiton we have created a special connection between our Beaver colonies and the home. This Christmas each of our Beavers made two wooden Christmas tree decorations: one to take home and give to someone special, and one to place on a card to give to an elderly person to show they were being thought of at Christmas. On Sunday 8th December, ten Beavers, seven Leaders and one parent made a special visit to Hamilton Nursing Home to give the cards to the residents. Several residents remembered our visit the previous year, and for one gentleman we stirred happy memories of his own Scouting years. Around half of the residents were unable to come to the lounge so we went in small groups to visit them in their rooms, before we sang a cheerful 'Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer' to everyone. I have a feeling that the Leaders enjoyed seeing how much joy the residents got from our visit as much as the Beavers did! We all came away feeling joyful.



The remaining cards were taken by John Baldwin, our Group President, to Claygate recipients of the Meals on Wheels Service. We received a number of 'thank you' cards, showing how much people enjoyed receiving this small gift, and John came to thank each colony at their first meeting in 2025 and show them the cards. We hope to continue to find ways to maintain a connection between our young people and older people in our community as it is so beneficial for everyone.

...and then we had the **Beaver District Party!**



On Saturday 1st February 48 Beavers from 1st Claygate joined around 150 other Beavers from the other groups in Esher District to take part in a *Wind in the Willows* themed event. They made masks, decorated frog-shaped biscuits, played parachute games and made 'pop-up' moles. The latter was particularly appropriate as our very own Mole (Micheline) had taken on the role of Leader in Charge for the event! After a short snack break, we all enjoyed watching and participating in a performance of *Wind in the Willows* by the Cat's Grin Theatre Company. The Beavers were hugely entertained by their antics and



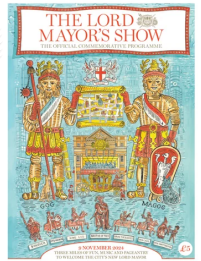
sense of fun, in fact one Beaver was spotted jumping up and down shouting 'They are so funny!'

Thanks are due to all the Leaders and parent helpers who make it possible to do this in addition to the weekly programme.

Rosy Treasure (ABSL Willow), on behalf of The Beaver Leader Team



Lord Mayor's Show 2024



The Band Live on the BBC! Lord Mayor's Show, Central London

The Band were delighted to have been selected once again to take part in the Lord Mayor's Show in central London on 9th November. Nearly 7,000 people take part in the parade itself, along with 200 horses and more than 150 floats. The procession stretches three miles and passes the Bank of England, Mansion House, St Paul's Cathedral and the Royal Courts of Justice before returning to Mansion House via Victoria Embankment.

It's a huge commitment for the whole band. We leave Claygate at 7am on a coach, and the first challenge of the day is for the coach driver to navigate all of the security cordons and closed roads to get us to the meeting point! It isn't a glamorous start to the day as the meeting point is in an underground car park! We then have a wait of up to three hours before it's our turn to join the huge parade. The weather this year was dry and the atmosphere in London was excellent, with tens of thousands of people lining the route. The event is screened live on the BBC and this year the band secured excellent TV coverage – looking and sounding great for all to see! It's a long march out, and then after a short break for lunch the return back through the City requires another burst of energy. It's then always a quieter return journey (with many falling asleep) before we arrive back to Claygate around 6pm.

The Lord Mayor's Show has been held for over 800 years and it's a truly remarkable event on a massive scale. It's a privilege to be a part of it and, as always, everyone in the band rose to the occasion, lifted by the cheers and encouragement from the crowds along the route. Well done to everyone involved.



A Busy Musical Christmas 2024



Claygate Day Centre Christmas Fair

December is always the band's busiest time of the year, and this year was no exception. But the Christmas season actually began in mid-November when the band supported the Christmas Fair at the Claygate Day Centre – a lovely event for the village community (and a chance for some early Christmas carol practice!).



Switching on the Christmas Lights

A couple of weeks later, the band entertained the crowds at the Christmas Lights switch-on event in the Parade – always a fun event and a cornerstone of the Claygate village calendar.



Princess Alice Light up a Life Service of Remembrance

The following day, the band were privileged to be asked to provide the music for Princess Alice Hospice's "Light up a Life Service of Remembrance" – a moving and memorable event for all involved and where members of the senior band delivered excellent musical support.



A wet & Windy "Carols on the Green"

The following Sunday, the Band led the carol singing on the Village Green in collaboration with Holy Trinity Church. The stormy weather did its best to keep people away – but the rain subsided as the event began and in spite of the conditions the band's contribution to the Christmas atmosphere was excellent and welcomed by all who attended.

Carols Round the Campfire

The last formal Scouting event of the year was the Carols Round the Campfire event at the Scout Centre – a lovely evening attended by many members of the Group and their families. After carol singing by the campfire, the event moves indoors. After some much needed refreshments, the Scout Centre reverberated to the sound of the audience singing along to some fabulous Christmas tunes including "12 Days of Christmas" – always the favourite! And thanks to the outstanding talents of Catherine & Lucy, part of the Scout Centre was turned into the most amazing Santa's Grotto, adding to an entertaining and enjoyable evening for all who attended.



Carol Singing Round Claygate

But that isn't the end of the Band. On the Friday and Saturday evenings before Christmas, the band play carols around the village. These are always enjoyable events, and it is fabulous when families come out onto the streets to sing along and enjoy the occasion. What's more, the Band raised an amazing £1,900 for Group funds – an excellent way to end the year. What an achievement.



Looking Ahead to 2025

With the Christmas Carols returned to the cupboard for another year, the Band returned from the Christmas break in January with just a few weeks to prepare for their annual concert which is taking place on Saturday 29th March 2025 at Holy Trinity Church, Claygate. The concert is always one of the highlights of the year, and as always the Band Leader has introduced many new pieces which need to be mastered before the concert! Tickets can be secured in advance via the Scout centre website, or are available on the door. The concert starts at 7:30pm.



But the highlight of the year will undoubtedly be the senior band's trip to Ypres, Belgium, where we have the honour to perform with the Last Post Association at the Menin Gate Ceremony – an event that will be remembered by all for many years to come.



Cubs District Sausage Sizzle



25 cubs from 1st Claygate attended the District Sausage Sizzle last October. This is an annual event, usually held at the Dittons HQ, where cubs from across the District come together for an afternoon to light a fire, cook sausages, onions and marshmallows over their fire and then learn how to extinguish the fire safely, and thereby achieve their backwoods cooking activity badge. If we are lucky, (and we usually are) the model railway is open and the cubs get the opportunity of a ride while they wait for their fires to burn down to embers suitable for cooking.

25 was an unusually large sign up for this event, even though we restrict the sign up initially to those cubs who have been a cub for a year or less, and have not been invited before. The District allocated 5 places per pack so it looked like we would have some disappointed cubs. However with a couple of packs choosing not to attend the District were able to offer the additional places we required.

Thanks as always to the leaders and parents who came along and supported the event so that it could be delivered safely.



Cub Fundraising : Shooting Star Children's Hospice



Each year in the Autumn the cub packs fundraise for a charity chosen by the cubs. The funds are primarily raised at the Claygate Christmas Lights by selling items that the cubs have made themselves. This activity is part of the Cub World Challenge Award.

The process of choosing a charity starts early in the term with one of the packs discussing which charities they might like to support, and drawing up a short list which all three packs then vote on to select the charity. Lynx pack were in charge of creating the short list in 2025 and were encouraged to look for local charities where the sort of sum we raise would be significant. The charity eventually chosen was the Shooting Star Children's Hospice.

The couple of meetings before the Christmas Lights were busy ones, and the scout centre was filled with the smell of baking and the hum of happy activity. The items offered for sale this year were mini Christmas tree decorations, stained glass window biscuits, mince pies, pepernoten, (Dutch spicy biscuits) and hot chocolate reindeer. These items sold well and the cubs raised just over £500 which was donated to the Shooting Star Children's Hospice along with a share of the funds raised at the Carols Round The Campfire. We duly received a thank you card acknowledging our donation.



1st Claygate Scout & Guide Band



(The band at the Windsor Castle)

Annual Spring Concert

Saturday 29th March 2025

Doors - 7.00pm

Concert - 7:30pm

Holy Trinity Church, Church Road, Claygate

Tickets available on the door

All tickets - £9 (Children Under 16 – free)

Any inquiries to: bandinfo@claygatescouts.org



Kings Scout Award: Evie Dawes



When I joined 1st Claygate as a Beaver, at just six years old, I had no idea how much this group would become a part of my life. What I do remember is the sense of excitement and belonging that I felt from the very first meeting, largely thanks to the dedication of the leaders and the amazing activities they made available to me. I didn't realise then how those early experiences would lay the foundation for everything that came after, transforming into the most amazing experience possible.

I have been through each section of the group, from beavers all the way to explorers, I also joined our band at the age of eight in 2014, which provided a whole new avenue of opportunity and development. Our marching band has enabled me to not only develop my musical skills but to perform with a fantastic group of musicians in locations such as the Menin Gate, the Cenotaph, and in the Disneyland Parade in Paris. These experiences are ones that most people my age do not have the opportunity to embark on, this only reinforces my gratitude for the hard work of those who made it possible.

The friendships I've made in Scouting are some of the most meaningful relationships possible, transforming from simply friends into a form of family with whom I can feel totally comfortable and put every ounce of trust into. I had the greatest chance to build bonds with people who would eventually become lifelong friends, one of my oldest and closest friends I met on my very first Beaver camp, now we have thirteen years of friendship and memories, having worked together in almost every scenario, from being in the same patrol in weekly meetings, to working as partners to lead our group in the mountains of Morocco. As I moved up through the group to Cubs, Scouts, and eventually Explorers, those friendships only deepened. There's something about the shared experiences; the team-building activities, the challenges, the camping trips, that creates a unique sense of camaraderie. Whether we were working together to set up a tent, conquering a mountain, or just sitting around the campfire, we were a team. We supported each other through every challenge, and those moments created connections that go beyond those friendships made in any other environment.

Over time, I learned how to communicate better, how to lead when necessary, and how to step back and let others take charge when they had the right skills. This led me to take on more leadership roles within the scout group, working with the cub, scout and explorer leadership teams to assist in the running of their sessions and camps. This opportunity enabled me to grow in confidence and enhance my skillset, it helped to get my first part-time job at sixteen as I could clearly demonstrate that I was able to work as part of a team but also to show I had confidence to lead a team when the required.

But none of this would have been possible without the incredible leaders who have supported me over the years. The leaders at 1st Claygate Scout Group are unmatched in their dedication, willing to give up so much of their time to enrich the lives of the children of our community. Their dedication that enabled me to have such positive and enjoyable experiences has inspired me and many others my age in our scout group to volunteer ourselves so that other children can have the same incredible opportunities that we did.

However, one of the best aspects of scouting is the most incredible memories you create, from the laughs around the campfire on a group camp to the breathtaking views of mountains and deserts from the top of a mountain in Morocco, even the biggest challenge comes with an enduring pride for undertaking it. Two memories stick out to me, the first being our band's performance under the Menin Gate, the reverence of the occasion, and the culmination of months of hard work resulting in a hauntingly beautiful service, which provided us with a chance to demonstrate our respect for such an important value, the act of remembrance.



The second was one from the summer just gone. As part of the Explorer scout unit I was able to go to Morocco, on this trip we climbed Mount Toubkal, the highest mountain in North Africa. After a gruelling climb to the summit, with an early four o'clock start, the memory of not only the sprawling landscape, almost like an oil painting of the Atlas mountains panning into the dunes of the Sahara desert, was breathtaking. But also the sheer feeling of pride, both of my own achievement and that of my fellow explorers who had endured many trials to get here and done so with admirable determination. It was a feeling of exhilaration that I cannot forget.

Joining the Scouts means becoming part of a global network of people who share a commitment to making the world a better place, to be a part of a globally respected organisation that connects people from all over the world. It's not just about badges and activities, it's about building character, teamwork, and lasting memories. So, If you're considering it, trust me, you won't regret it, I certainly never have.

Written by Evie Dawes, 1st Claygate Network Scout.



WHY NOT JOIN THE BAND?

Rehearsals take place on a Friday evening at Scout HQ. Band membership is open to all involved in the Scouting (cubs and older) and Guiding movements in Claygate.

If you are interested in joining, or just wish to find out more information, please contact Robin Wilkinson, our Band Leader, on 01372 464173 (robinwilkinson149@gmail.com).

The band is looking to attract new people from brownies, guides, rangers, cubs, scouts and explorer scouts to join. **You don't need to play an instrument already** – we can lend instruments to you and help with tuition. Existing musicians are of course also very welcome. We select music to play that enables people of all musical abilities to take part. You're never too old to learn an instrument – and it is great fun too.



Act of Remembrance



In November, the band were once again proud to lead two events in remembrance of all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in wars and conflicts around the globe.

Brookwood Military Cemetery

On Sunday 3rd November we had the privilege to lead a parade for Woking Scouts at Brookwood military cemetery. This parade has fond memories for the band, as it links to our performance in 2018 at the Menin Gate in Ypres, Belgium. That ceremony is a homage for the 11 million military personnel that lost their lives during the First World War.



In Ypres, the Last Post ceremony takes place every evening at 20:00 under the Menin Gate, one of the four memorials to 'the missing in Belgian Flanders'. This tradition started on 1st July 1928 and has continued uninterrupted every evening other than during the Second World War, when Ypres fell into German hands on 20th May 1940.

At this point, the ceremony was transferred to the Brookwood Military Cemetery in the UK from December 1941, until Polish forces liberated the town of Ypres on the 6th of September 1944. After the daily ceremony returned to Ypres, the Brookwood Last Post Association continue the ceremony at Brookwood on the first Sunday of each month.

We were delighted to support Woking Scouts as they paid their respects at the November ceremony. We are also delighted that we have once again secured permission from the Last Post Association to take part in the ceremony at the Ypres Menin Gate in September 2025.

Claygate Remembrance Parade

The following Sunday, 10th November, we were on parade again leading the Remembrance Parade in Claygate – a central moment in our band calendar.

A flawless Last Post performed by Will Smith, and excellent marching and playing by the whole band, received praise from many in the Village.



James and James Join up



We are delighted that two of our network band members have recently started careers in His Majesty's Armed Services... and they are both called James.

James Almer Hall

James Almer Hall is continuing with music after graduating from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. He has joined the Band of the Welsh Guards. James completed his training in mid 2024: 3 months of basic training at Pirbright barracks followed by 6 months of trade specific training at the Royal Military School of Music in Portsmouth.

He is now based at Wellington Barracks with the Band of the Welsh Guards, with whom he will be performing on the Cornet at many events, such as Trooping the Colour and Changing the Guard at Buckingham Palace, St James' Palace and Windsor Castle on a regular basis.

James Perkins

James Perkins plays the Clarinet with the band. After a History degree from Oxford, he underwent 12 months of officer training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and commissioned in August 2024. He then spent 4 months of specialised infantry training in the Brecon Beacons up to December 2024.

James commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant with the 3rd Battalion of The Royal Regiment of Scotland. He started this role in January this year and is based at Fort George near Inverness (he looks very good in his kilt)

While at Sandhurst, James won the two top prizes for his intake: the King's Medal and the Sword of Honour, which he received from the Chief of the Defence Staff Admiral Sir Tony Radakin.

Robin Wilkinson, band leader said " Both James's are marvellous musicians and individuals. It is wonderful to see our senior members being successful. They contributed hugely to the Claygate Band and I am sure they will both thrive in their new roles. "

We wish them both great success.

Military Covenant:

Coincidentally, Surrey Scouts signed the Military Covenant in June 2024. This means that Surrey Scouts will enable young people from the armed forces community to join scouting and provide support to military families.



Scouts Night Hike



This popular annual event involves about 20 teams from around the district, walking a 9-mile route at night with incidents to deal with at the checkpoints.

This year's event was in the Frensham Ponds area and was a great success, with all teams making it around the course without getting hopelessly lost! The incidents included a cooking challenge and a signals puzzle. Teams also have to answer questions on the way round to make sure they took the correct route.

We finished in the early hours of Sunday morning, so the Scouts were taken back to Claygate to sleep at the Scout Centre. Claygate competition teams, who walk unaccompanied, did very well with one team getting back first. The training teams, for younger scouts, are accompanied by leaders but do the same course and all successfully completed the course.

We're looking forward to the District Day Hike in March 2025 and tackling another Night Hike somewhere in the Surrey Hills later in the year.

Scouts North Downs Expedition



Senior Explorer Scout Young Leader Award



Three of our Explorer Scouts have achieved the Senior Young Leader Award, which is a BTEC Level 2.

The Surrey Scouts Senior Explorer Scout Young Leader Award (SESYL) is an advanced leadership programme for those with their YL Award. It is delivered at our twice-yearly Conferences.



Senior A

Leading Yourself



Senior B

Leading Together
(Teamwork)



Senior C

Leading Others



Senior D

Externally validated qualification;
starts when a SESYL is over 16

BTEC Level 2 Diploma in Teamwork
and Personal Development in the
Community



Well done Jamie, Jess and Lydia

Going Up Ceremony



**Y'ALL ARE INVITED TO A RIP-ROARING
GOOD TIME AT THE BIGGEST
HOEDOWN OF THE YEAR!**

OAKEN LANE HOEDOWN



£20
per
ticket

SATURDAY 7TH JUNE

7:00PM

**1ST CLAYGATE
SCOUT CENTRE**

**RAISING MONEY FOR 1ST CLAYGATE SCOUTS.
DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY, ENJOY PULLED PORK,
WINE, BEER, S'MORES AROUND THE FIRE AND MUCH
MORE.**

SADDLE UP AND BE PART OF THE ADVENTURE!

TICKETS ON SALE SOON



Diary to Summer



MONTH & DATE	EVENT	Beaver Scouts	Cub Scouts	Scouts	Explorer Scouts	Network Scouts	SASU	Band	Group Support
March									
08th-09th	6ers and 2nders Weekend								
15th	District Scout Day Hike								
23rd	District Cross County Run (Oxshott Heath) Provisional (P)				EXPLORERS	network ⁺			X
23rd	Band Rehearsal								
29th	Band Concert								X
April									
03rd	Young Leader Module A Training				EXPLORERS	network ⁺			
06th	District Day Hike (Cubs)								
26th	Jumble Sale				EXPLORERS	network ⁺			X
26th	Claygate Clean Up				EXPLORERS	network ⁺			X
27th	St George's Day Parade				EXPLORERS	network ⁺			X
May									
03rd-05th	D of E Bronze and Silver Expeditions				EXPLORERS				
09th-10th	Plant Sale Scout Centre								X
11th	District Scouting Skills & First Aid Comp (am)								
12th	Young Leader Module A Training				EXPLORERS	network ⁺			
16th-18th	Group Camp (GAW) at Polyapes Polyapes				EXPLORERS	network ⁺			X
June									
07th	Claygate Hoedown Scout Centre				EXPLORERS	network ⁺			X
14th	Bazzaz Merrist Wood								
17th	Explorers Shooting Competition Polyapes				EXPLORERS				
22nd	District Scout Archery (TBC) at Scout Centre Scout Centre (P)								
27th-29th	District Cub Camp Polyapes Polyapes								
July									
TBA	District Beaver Summer Event								
05th-06th	Young Leader Bushcraft Camp (Polyapes) Polyapes				EXPLORERS	network ⁺			
06th	Group AGM (Provisional) (P)				EXPLORERS	network ⁺			X
08th	Young Leader Module A Training				EXPLORERS	network ⁺			
09th	Explorer Social / BBQ Polyapes				EXPLORERS				
12th	Flower Show								X
16th	District Explorer Water Activities				EXPLORERS				
19th	District Explorer Social				EXPLORERS				
19th-26th	Explorer Camp Cornwall				EXPLORERS	network ⁺			
26th-02nd Aug	Scout Summer Camp								
August									
29th-30th	Claygate Beer Festival Scout Centre								X