



December 2013

Dear parents and families,

On behalf of all the Leaders and Executive of the **1st Highams Park Scout Group** we would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yes, you read that correctly. Following the dogged efforts of a few people, we have officially changed our name to **1st Highams Park**. This is a fantastic achievement, and much better reflects our identity and location. We hope you agree. Thank you to those who persevered with this battle, in particular Ian Stephens and 'Teddy' Edwards. New flags and badges have been ordered. All you have to do is sew them on.

It has been another brilliant year for the Group and our children will take away some amazing memories. It's hard to pick out the highlights but here goes:

- Being blessed by the sun gods at the annual Family Hog Roast in September. We had our biggest turnout ever and the sight of the kids enjoying the late evening sunshine was a delight. Special thanks to Leigh and James Morl.
- Winning Scout Group of the Year at the annual District Scout Awards. This was based on our overall numbers, general organisation, and jam packed programmes.
- Group members Martha, Billy, Zoe, Luke, David, Peter and Hollie raising over £400 bag packing in Sainsbury's.
- A cracking effort at the annual District swimming gala. Results were: Cubs Swimming 1st Place, Cub Non Swimming 5th Place, Overall Swimming and Non Swimming 2nd, Scouts Swimming 3rd Place, Scouts Non Swimming 3rd Place, Explorers 2nd overall. Well done to all our swimmers - Harrison, Tilly, Alice, Evie, Beau, Oscar, Daisy, Lucy, Kiera, Jess, Martha, Lily, Luke and Hollie.
- A stack of Beavers securing Chief Scout Bronze Awards, their first step towards greatness: Matty Scarratt, Maisie Kelly, Alice Jarvice, Lily Etherington, Evie Ceeney, Rowan Pocock, Charlie Hunt, George Farrell, Boris Richter, Conner Dunne, Dylon Gibson, Harrison Lainchbury and Lawrence De Bono.
- The Beavers enjoying their own camp sleepover at the Mally, with campfire and singsong. For many of our little ones, this was their first night camping away from home and family.
- Cubs completing a challenging overnight hike and camp in unseasonably freezing conditions at High Beech. All the more exciting considering they got lost. Twice.

- The Scouts attending the first District Scout Camp at Bounds Green, mixing with other Troops and doing lots of activities and new skills. We have high hopes that this will become an annual event.
- Scout Luke Walker qualifying for the Dinghy Sailor badge. Well done!
- Six of our Explorers attending Jamboree selection, four of whom have been selected for the 2015 World Scout Jamboree in Japan. Congratulations to Peter Baxter, Hollie Edwards, Robert Ellis and Zoe Rogers.
- Our first ever Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award and Queens Scout Award winners, to be presented by the good Duke himself at Buckingham Palace. Congratulations to Robert Edwards, Luke Yarnell and Luke Herbert, who are all now leaders/helpers within the Group or District. 17 Bronze Awards/Chief Scout Diamond Awards and 3 Silver/Chief Scout Platinum Awards were also presented to our Explorers. Keep going.
- Another hugely popular and successful Family Camp with copious amounts of sunshine and gloriously grubby children. The weekend culminated in the longest egg throw in history and the most blatant cheating by over-competitive parents. There 'aint no flies on us!' A mega thanks to Ian, Andy and Paul.
- Hosting the 2013 District Christmas Carol Service in front of a bumper crowd at All Saints. The children blitzed the grown-ups in the Christmas quiz.

Wow. What a fantastic list. We should feel immensely proud of our young people. All this is, of course, only made possible by our small army of passionate volunteers to whom we are incredibly grateful. Without them there is no 1st Highams Park Scout Group. If you are interested in becoming involved and enriching the lives of our children we would be happy to have you on board. You will find it lots of fun and hugely rewarding. Get in touch.

Enjoy the festive season, and we will see you next year.

Jason De Bono, Group Chairman