

Woodside Beavers - 2024-2025

Our Colony members have had great fun over the last 12 months. They've taken part in a wide range of activities and experiences. We currently have 21 Beavers in the colony.

We completed the summer term with more outdoor activities to make the most of the sunshine and light evenings - Beavers completed their Cyclist badge at Jubilee Fields and for another challenge, constructed a giant fleur de lis on the grass at The Den. They also enjoyed a teddy bear hunt and building fires in lodge groups.



The highlight of the summer term was the Group Camp at Garners Field near Farnham. In addition to some brilliant adventurous activities - climbing, shooting, archery and tomahawk throwing - Beavers participated in several Olympic-themed activities - making medals, stencilling T shirts with the Olympic rings, and trying out Olympic sports including equestrian events, relay, discus and javelin.



We always start each new term with team games and challenges to welcome new members, introduce buddies and get to know each other. This year, Beavers made domino runs, constructed bridges across a gap with straws and newspaper - which could support a Hot Wheels car, made shapes as a team using only a rope, replicated successively more complex Lego builds with limited viewing time, asked questions of their peers to complete a sheet Find a Beaver who..... and tried a modern day version of the Generation Game's conveyor belt memory game (only adults of a certain age will remember that on Saturday night TV!)

In the autumn term, Beavers tried their hand at erecting tents as part of their Camp Craft badge. We celebrated Apple day by trying different varieties of English apples and juices, playing apple games - apple and spoon race, passing an apple under the chin and of course apple bobbing. Over the winter months, we had a go at Morris dancing, learnt about the human skeleton, bone strength and our unique DNA to complete the special Behind the Scenes in Healthcare challenge badge. We also had a visit from a phlebotomist who explained how blood is taken and the journey of a blood sample to the laboratory.



Everyone enjoyed a torchlight wide game in the woods at Chawton, looking for lanyards with fireworks designs. Their route was lit with glow sticks - a lot of preparation was required for that meeting! We held a hotly contested sandwich competition, with Rory, the chef from dill restaurant coming to judge the entries. The top three were: 3rd place - sausage, cheese and pesto; 2nd - open sandwich on sourdough with banana, cashews and honey drizzle; and 1st - triple decker with ham, grated Red Leicester, cucumber, French mustard sauce and a sprinkling of bacon crisps!

We had some fun with 3 experiments led by Sarah from Fun Science - making erupting volcanoes, slime and functioning electromagnets. In a second meeting, Beavers made their own optical illusion, had a try at screaming balloons and watched as Leaders added mentos to coke in a favourite experiment outside. We had 2 teams taking part in the District Highland Games in Autumn 2024 - Beavers tried events including tossing the caber, hammer throwing and haggis throwing. They enjoyed a Christmas colony challenge, using knotting know-how to join ropes long enough to reach a treasure chest and then haul it in. They were delighted to find that it contained Christmas sweet treats and a blanket badge. They also turned Young Leader Starling into a snowman and decorated Leaders and helpers in festive relay games!

After Christmas, we returned to a programme including Emergency Aid, Digital Citizen and Global Issues. Beavers were able to meet a paramedic, practice making calls to emergency services, learn how to treat simple wounds and go inside the ambulance. They thought about passwords for Digital Citizen and tried making their own TV tutorial for a task after watching how to do it on YouTube. Each lodge was allocated one of 4 tasks - fold a T shirt, wrap a present, clean teeth and roll necker correctly. They loved pretending to be on TV while their peers watched their demo!



Beavers found out about various global issues, both for their activity badge and to complete the Scouts Against Malaria badge too. They watched videos of children in Zambia walking miles to collect contaminated water, and then considered what materials they could use in a water filter. They've also learnt about Fair Trade and endangered animals. In respect of malaria, they are now quite savvy about mosquitoes, the countries which are most affected, and measures which can be taken to stop the spread of infection. A number of our Beavers undertook enterprising fundraising activities - in particular, a bake sale and homemade lemonade stand saw these young stall holders raise significant sums.

This term we had some furry and feathered friends to see the Beavers at The Den - they met a chicken, guinea pigs and a dog. Some Beavers will complete their Animal Friend badge if they can help to look after a pet for 4 weeks and keep records about it. We have also been discussing safety at home, in the community, and around water. Beavers have practised the green cross code, met serving local fire fighters and thought about what steps they should take in the event of a fire. We continued the theme to think about items at home which present risks, considered who might be safe and trusted adults, and will address water safety further in a swimming session later in June.

We continue to run Nights away events every term. We held a sleepover at The Den on the Remembrance weekend, with Blitz-themed activities - Beavers were intrigued to see the few belongings in a small suitcase of a child evacuated from the city to the countryside to be safer from bombing; they made gas masks and built shelters. When the air raid siren went off, they collected their gas masks quickly and ensured that everyone in their group was safely in their shelter. Later, we had a poignant moment of reflection as everyone lit a candle and listened to the Last Post. In the morning, all participants walked up to join the parade from Market Square.

Our Spring term sleepover was an event for novices with a simple theme of minute-to-win-it games in teams on a Round Robin. The highlight of this year's Beaver camps is probably the Great Beavers Sleepover held at Alton Assembly Rooms in May. Over 50 children attended from colonies in Alton, Bentley and Four Marks. On the Saturday afternoon, everyone followed a picture trail to Flood Meadows, where there were 4 outdoor activities to complete - duck racing on the river, May pole dancing and 2 wide games. After returning to the venue for a supper of pasta bolognese and ice cream, Beavers watched The Minions on the big screen. On Sunday morning they focussed on 4 creative activities - marble run construction, friendship bracelets, paper flower garlands and making up skits. It was a great opportunity to meet new people and make new friends.



Our Summer adventure camp was at The Den in early June with all activities outdoors, including sleeping and cooking. Beavers made the Union flag from natural materials up on the bank, cooked s'mores over the fire, practised their singing and played outdoor games. Sunday morning was time for another hike.

We've had a couple of visits to Borovere Care Home - we now have an established relationship and the residents look forward to seeing the Beavers. We were requested to include camp fire singing on one visit and this seemed to go down well, with some residents remembering the songs from their own childhood days. Beavers played games such as Jenga, dominoes and Connect 4 with the residents and also conducted some interviews. At a subsequent meeting, they made Easter cards to send to the residents. This term, they have supported some gardening tasks - planting up pots and sowing seeds in the vegetable patch. This involvement helps the Beavers gain their Community Impact badge.

Another exciting trip was a visit to Ewhurst Park in March to see the Beaver enclosure where there is a breeding pair of beavers who had 2 kits last summer. Our Beavers entered a naming competition for the new arrivals and the name Bobby was put forward by Kestrel colony and chosen for one of the kits. The Rangers at Ewhurst Park were very informative and showed us all the signs of real beaver activity on the estate - it was fascinating. The closest we got to them was several big shows of ripples on the lake.

At least one hike per term has built stamina - we held a family hike at Home Farm last autumn, Fair Trade Welly Hike in February - this is a favourite route with plenty of water and mud! Two-thirds of our members joined the international TrailJam event last month. We have another hike coming up at the end of June at another popular location - Hogmoor Inclosure.

You can see we've had a busy time! My thanks go to our brilliant Leaders - Merlin, Badger, and Eagle, Young Leaders - Sparrow and Starling who do a great job to support our young members. Thank you also to those parents who step up to help at our meetings and outings, and of course Matt, our Group Lead Volunteer, who works so hard behind the scenes for everyone's benefit at 3rd Alton.

We continue to need new people to join our Leadership team to ensure sustainability of our Sections. Leading is great fun, and provides all sorts of new opportunities. Please do contact us if you'd like to don a uniform or help in another capacity. We all started from scratch too and have developed our knowledge and skills over time - there is lots of support available.

Anna (Tawny)

Beavers Section Leader - Woodside

