

3rd Alton Kestrel Beaver Colony Annual Report 2025-2026

Another year has flown by and, once again, our Beavers have thrown themselves into every challenge, adventure and opportunity that came their way. Across the year we have welcomed new members into the colony, invested new Beavers, awarded a huge number of badges (278 to be exact) and watched our young people grow in confidence, independence and teamwork.

From campfires and canal boats to space exploration, RAF helicopters, international adventures and navigation challenges, the program has been packed with variety. Whether learning new skills, helping others, exploring the outdoors or simply having fun with friends, our Beavers have continued to embody the Scout values and develop valuable #SkillsForLife.

Autumn Adventures

We began the Autumn term by welcoming new Beavers into the colony and helping everyone settle into their new lodges. We were also very excited to welcome Puffin as new Beaver Leader (who moved up from Squirrels). Team games and challenges quickly helped new friendships form and set the tone for another exciting year. Autumn started with one of our favourite activities – campfires. The Beavers learnt how to build and light fires safely, enjoyed songs around the fire and even managed a few treats cooked over the flames.



The following weeks saw us tackle the Sailing Activity Badge. The Beavers designed and built their own model boats before putting them to the test. There was plenty of creativity on display and lots of excitement when the finished boats finally set sail. We also learnt about pioneering aviator Amy Johnson before holding our own paper aeroplane flying competition.



October also included investing our new Beavers and a memorable canal boat trip, giving the Beavers the opportunity to experience life on the waterways first hand.



Back at the Den, we began our Money Skills badge, helping Beavers understand spending, saving and making sensible financial decisions.

Our international adventure this term took us to Mexico, where we learnt about Día de los Muertos through crafts, traditions and food tasting. The Beavers thoroughly enjoyed exploring another culture and trying something new.



November brought our evening hike to the Cairn. Equipped with torches and plenty of enthusiasm, the Beavers explored Alton after dark and put their outdoor skills into practice, rounded off with enjoying some sparklers back at the Den.



As always, the colony proudly represented 3rd Alton at the Remembrance Parade. The Beavers showed great respect and maturity throughout the event and were a credit to both the colony and the wider Scout Group.



A particular highlight was our visit to RAF Odiham. The Beavers were fascinated by the helicopters, equipment and personnel they met. Getting up close to the Chinook helicopters and trying on pilot equipment made for an unforgettable evening.



We rounded off the term with our Digital Maker badge, introducing the Beavers to technology, problem solving and computing skills.

The "Between the Bookshelves" sleepover was another huge success, combining adventure, friendship and just a little bit of bedtime excitement!



The year ended with Christmas crafts, festive games, Chief Scout Bronze awards and swimming-up ceremonies. The Beavers created Christmas cards and decorations for residents at Borovere Care Home, spreading a little festive cheer while thinking about others.



Spring Surprises

We returned after Christmas with a warm welcome to new members and an adventurous start to the Spring term. One of the biggest projects of the term was our Space Activity Badge. The Beavers learnt about the Solar System, the International Space Station and life as an astronaut, while creating some fantastic space-themed artwork.

The colony then headed "Down Under" for a series of Australian-themed activities, learning about life in Australia through games and challenges. We followed this with our Health and Fitness badge, helping the Beavers understand exercise, healthy lifestyles and looking after their bodies.



A February hike gave everyone another opportunity to enjoy the outdoors while building confidence and independence away from the Den.



One of the most memorable parts of the Spring term was our Disability Awareness badge. We were delighted to welcome guide dog owners and their dogs, helping the Beavers learn more about sight loss, hearing impairment and the importance of accessibility and inclusion.



We also had a most successful novices sleepover with a "glow in the dark" theme at the Den.



March included a Circus Skills Workshop where the Beavers discovered talents they never knew they had. From plate spinning to balancing skills, everyone had great fun trying something completely different.



The Beavers also explored physical disabilities through a range of practical activities designed to encourage empathy and understanding. These sessions generated some excellent discussions and thoughtful questions. They even got an opportunity to try out some painting using only their mouth and their feet.



Mother's Day crafts gave the Beavers an opportunity to create something special for home, while continuing work towards their Health and Fitness badge.



The term finished around the campfire, with badge catch-up activities, swimming up ceremonies and celebrations of everything the Beavers had achieved during the first half of the year.



We also said a very sad goodbye to Owl after many years of dedicated support to Kestrel Beavers (and previously Woodside Beavers). Leaders and Beavers alike were sorry to see her go, but we wish Owl every success and happiness in her next adventure. We hope she'll pop back to the Den from time to time, she will always be a valued part of our Beaver family!



At the beginning of the Easter holiday the Beavers enjoyed the 2nd Great Beavers Sleepover with many other Beavers from around the district and spent a fun weekend staying at Alton Assembly Rooms.

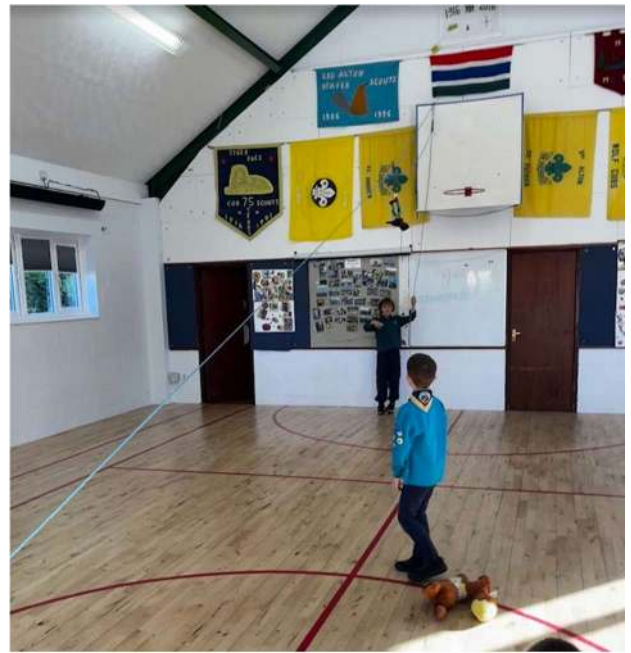


Summer Smiles

The Summer 2026 term began with a fresh start and another opportunity to welcome new members into the colony and we welcomed two new Leaders in Black Rat and Kite (who moved up from Squirrels). Our Gardener badge encouraged the Beavers to plant seeds, care for growing plants and understand where food comes from.

Our international journey this term took us to Asia, where we learnt more about China and experienced another culture through activities and visiting speakers as well as tasting some delicious Chinese food!

The term also included a series of problem-solving challenges which tested teamwork, communication and creative thinking. The Beavers demonstrated impressive determination and ingenuity while tackling a variety of puzzles and practical tasks.



One particularly memorable evening involved bringing along favourite teddy bears for a range of adventures and challenges. The Beavers' enthusiasm ensured plenty of laughter throughout the session, especially when their teddies were sent down a zip line prepared by some very helpful Scouts.

A hike around Selborne provided plenty of exercise and the chance to enjoy a few games along the way, all while taking in the beautiful Hampshire countryside.

The Scottish Thistle Camp provided fantastic opportunities for outdoor adventure, friendship and teamwork. Camps continue to be some of the most memorable experiences in Scouting and this year was no exception as we all look forward to Group Camp later this summer.



This year our Beavers have camped, hiked, navigated, explored space, visited RAF Odiham, learnt about disability awareness, celebrated cultures from around the world, developed practical life skills and made countless memories with their friends.

Throughout it all they have demonstrated enthusiasm, kindness, resilience and a willingness to try new things. It has been wonderful to watch them grow in confidence and develop new skills over the course of the year.

Several Beavers completed their Chief Scouts Bronze award and even more are very close to finishing. We are incredibly proud of everything they have achieved.

Many thanks, as always go to the amazing Kestrel Colony leadership team – Owl, Hedgehog, Puffin, Kite, Black Rat and Mouse and our Young Leader Lynx who always ensure the Beavers have lots of fun whilst building #skillsforlife.

As always, we're incredibly grateful to Matt, our Lead Volunteer, and Anna, our Deputy Lead Volunteer for their unwavering support behind the scenes. A heartfelt thank you also goes to all the parents who lend a hand at meetings, events, and camps - your involvement truly makes a difference. This support is essential for keeping the colony running smoothly and bringing all our exciting plans to life.

If you've ever considered getting involved yourself, we'd really love to hear from you. Whether it's helping occasionally at sessions, supporting trips, or even stepping into a uniformed role, there's a place for everyone and every bit of help matters. Many of our current volunteers started out just by lending a hand and found it so enjoyable and rewarding they wanted to do more.

Joining the team doesn't mean giving up all your free time, and the training is genuinely simpler (and more flexible) than you might expect. Plus, uniformed volunteers get to be part of shaping the program, leading adventures and making an even bigger impact on our young people's experiences.

If you're curious or want to chat about how you might fit in, just let us know – we're a friendly bunch and happy to talk through any ideas!

James (Hawk) – Team Leader Kestrel Beaver Colony