

March 2014



Beaver Challenge Trophy winners - 6th Heswall

District Website: <http://www.westwirralscouts.org.uk>

From the District Commissioner

Well we are now well into 2014 and it has been a relatively quiet time but I have had the pleasure of going to a number of Groups to present Service Awards. It is nice to see leaders who are dedicated to giving up time on a regular basis over many years from 5 to 25 years. It is also good to see the young people enjoying their Scouting. Unfortunately I was unable to go to the Cub 5-a-side football but I understand it was a success. It's funny how if a team loses it is due to poor refereeing. You would think we were professionals! It's not about winning it is about taking part and having FUN.

The first part of the year may have been quiet for me but some of you, you have been fighting with the completion of the Census Returns. I am pleased to announce that on a quick count we are up on last year when we were down on 2012. We are even up on 2012!

The Christmas Post Presentation evening was different this year in that we had the Moreton Boys and Girls Brigade Band playing for us at the beginning of the evening and the cast of the Gang Show doing three numbers at the end of the evening. It made for a good evening, for let's be honest it is nice to see the presentation of cheques to local charities and to receive our cheques, but it is not, normally, an exciting event.

I went to the Beaver Challenge Night what a good event the Beavers enjoyed themselves and the energy they had was tremendous. The Challenge was won by 6th Heswall. My thanks goes to Jayne Oliver for organising the evening and to the groups who put on the bases and manned them for the night. I guess they all felt it was worthwhile.

I attended a rehearsal for the Gang Show, which was great to see Scouting and Guiding in another activity. It promises to be a great show again this year. Despite being on holiday that week I will be back in time to see the Saturday Night performance. I'm looking forward to it.

Brian.

A pause for thought

WIRRAL HORN MARCH 2012.

Of the many books I received as gifts at Christmas there was one which contained the story of the “Pilgrim Fathers”. In the year 1608 they left England to live in Amsterdam in search of religious freedom. They lived in the Netherlands for 12 years before finally deciding to set out for the “New World”. They set sail in the “Mayflower” which was a cargo ship and not designed for carrying passengers. The cabin they slept in was supposed to accommodate 30 people and not the 80 of them.

They arrived after experiencing many hardships and yet had to endure many more whilst in America. A peace treaty was signed by them with the native Indians and 3 days of celebrations’ began to give Thanksgiving.

Of course you know this story and Americans still celebrate “Thanksgiving” usually with a family gathering to share food together.

I think that many of you gather together, especially at camp, to share food, companionship, enjoyment and give thanks for the opportunity to enjoy Scouting.

“May your God be with you as you share friendship and peace together.”

“AARON”





Beaver Report

I would like to thank all the groups that attended the Beaver challenge, it was nice to see so many groups there, and all the Beavers thoroughly enjoying themselves. I would like to congratulate 6th Heswall on winning the Beaver challenge trophy, 1st Thurstaston Thor colony taking 2nd place and 3rd Heswall taking 3rd place, congratulations to these groups as well. We are not going to Martin Mere in April now, we have decided to go to Gullivers World on Saturday 17th May. The numbers for this event have to be in by Friday 28th March.

The next Beaver leader meeting is on Wednesday 9th April at 7:45 Hilbre Scout Group H.Q. Hoylake.

Jayne Oliver A.D.C. Beavers

oliverjn@talktalk.net

0151 648 1754 or 07949457622





5-a-Side Tournament

Well done to all the Packs who took part, and congratulations to 1st Barnston (4th), 1st Newton (3rd), 1st Thurstaston (Reed) (Runners Up) and 2nd West Kirby (Winners). See separate report for more details.

Up & Coming Events

Safety Poster Competition

This years topic will be **Rail Safety**. Each pack can submit 1 poster per Six, from which one Six will be chosen to represent their pack at the Grand Final. Posters to be returned to Alan by swimming gala.

Grand Final to be held at 6th Heswall, 18:30hrs on Thursday 20th March.

St Georges Day

Being held on 27th April,

District Cub Outing – sat 5th April, Chester Zoo

Leave the Wirral around 09:15 hrs, leave zoo at 16:00 (to avoid the mad rush in shop and at carpark etc). Cost will be £20.00 per adult, child 3 to 15 £17, children under 3 years free (if sitting on knee / luggage rack etc) if defo want a seat for them £5, people over 65 £17 (as I'm assuming they'll need seat on the bus for sure). Let me know reasonably final numbers by the 23rd Feb

District Cub Skills Day / weekend – 10th & 11th May

Following many years of wonderful Skills Day, Christine has 'retired' from organising this event and looking at new ideas. Building on previous suggestions that the Skills day could be developed as an overnight event, with Packs deciding to either camp or attend for just the day. Early days but probably around £20 per Pack for overnight stay, £10 per pack for daytime only. Teams of 6 cubs, at least 3 under 9 1/2, at this stage 1 Team per Pack. 1st Thurstastons HQ. If you are interested please let Matty know jonesy456@live.co.uk

Cub Camps – Spring and Autumn

Sandiways 13th to 15th June 2014

Queen Charlotte Wood, 26th to 28th Sept

If you are interested in attending the June camp there is a planning meeting at 19:30hrs tues 25th Feb at 1st Thurstastons HQ. If you are unable to attend this meeting please let Sue Flush know of your interest anyway.

Next District CSL meeting

Next Cub Leaders District Meeting 20:30hrs, 28th April 2014 at St Andrews HQ, namely the MACLEOD BUILDING, MUMFORD LANE, MEOLS

Alan Bennett (ADC Cubs)

0151 606 0335 (07920 496 929)

alan.bennett@bamnuttall.co.uk



2014 5-a-side Tournament

14:00hrs on 25th January saw Leasowe Leisure Centre Sports Hall filled with around 175 cubs, Leaders and supporters. No, this was not a wide screen showing of the Merseyside Derby (though the timing was a coincidence) rather it was time yet again for the annual District 5-a-side Tournament, which saw 12 Packs taking part.

Initially after some teething troubles and blowing up of balls, the League Table matches were underway. Time and again Packs trooped out onto the pitches to play football, score goals and have fun.

After the completion of the 30 first round matches, during which all teams played well and sportingly, unfortunately several packs were knocked out, which if nothing else meant there was more space to stand and watch the remaining games.

1st Frankby beat 1st Barston (B) team in the playoff match, and so the Quarter Finals were started. Yet again there were some close matches, though some cubs were showing signs of tiring.

The Quarter Finals saw 5th Heswall, 1st Thurstaston (Fletcher), 4th Heswall and 1st Frankby Greasby (McClean) fall by the way side, though in doing so they all played very good football.

After a short break, for players and referee's to get their breath back, the semi's started and despite some extraordinary performances 1st Newton and 1st Barnston were unable to overcome their opponents.

In the 3rd place play off 1st Newton beat 1st Barnston, which was even more impressive considering they only had 5 cubs who played every minute of every match to get this far (and I got tired just watching them).



1st Barnston - 4th Place



1st Newton - 3rd Place

And so, after nearly 4 ½ hrs of football, to the Final, which saw last years 3rd placers take on the new team of the moment. After a relatively even match which turned round several times, with little between the 2 sides, 2nd West Kirby emerged the 6-5 winners over 1st Thurstaston (Reed) in one of the closest matches of the Tournament – very well deserved.

cubs



1st Thurstaston (Reed) - 2nd Place



2nd West Kirby - 1st Place

Many thanks to 'volunteer' referee's Andy & Colin for their sense of fair play and reasonableness, and also Christine for timekeeping, which all helped to provide the smooth running of the afternoon.

But most of all, loads of thanks to all of the Cubs who yet again displayed a sportsmanlike attitude over the whole event. It has to be said that whilst a lot of the matches were very close, I didn't see one incident of bad play over the whole Tournament. As is often the case, it's the little touches that can continue to go un-noticed that help best, with Teams often shaking hands with their opponents after the match. All in all, very well done to everyone.

Alan Bennett.



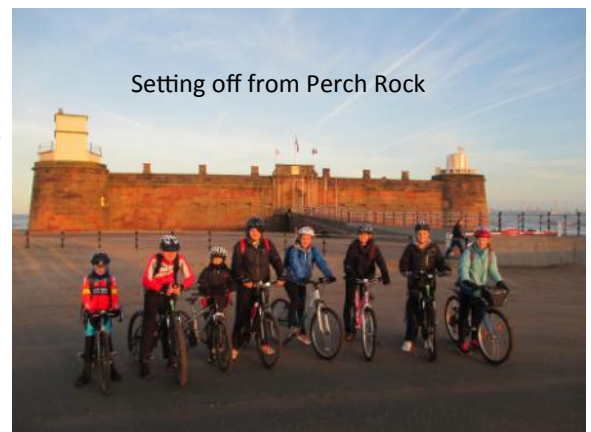


The River Mersey Sea to Source Expedition

The River Mersey is one of the UK's great rivers. Its name comes from the Anglo-Saxon *mæres*, a 'boundary', and *ea*, a river. The river was once possibly the border between the Saxon kingdoms of Northumbria, on the north bank, and Mercia, on the south bank. Today it is the prominent geographical feature of our county of Merseyside. However, while it may be our major river, only the estuary part of the river is in Merseyside and much of its 70-mile length flows through Cheshire and Greater Manchester.

Discovering the river through an expedition journey would likely have many thinking of travelling through an endless industrial and urban jungle; certainly, many scouts would quickly place it in the 'unsuitable terrain' category for an expedition. They would though be guilty of acting in haste as quite surprisingly much of the route that follows the river from sea to source passes through a green corridor, quite unknown to many thousands who live close-by. Urban cycle trails – especially those that are linked green corridor routes through the urban landscape – are a favourite of 1st Barnston Scouts. The challenge of an expedition along the River Mersey was one that we wanted to tackle! So in December a group of 8 scouts - Jack, Rosie, Alex, Greg, Emily, Steph, Olly and James - from 1st Barnston set out on a cycle expedition up the River Mersey, from the sea to the source.

We set off just after sunrise on a bright winter Saturday from Fort Perch, New Brighton, the point on the Wirral bank of the river where the river meets the sea in Liverpool Bay. It was a chilly start but we soon warmed up as we pedalled south down the promenade through Egremont, and Seacombe, past the docks of the East Float and Twelve Quays, and historical sites such as the One O'Clock Gun, to Woodside. It was now time for the expedition to go subterranean with a short trip on the underground to James Street. (It can be quite a challenge steering a bicycle through the narrow passageways and lifts of the Merseyrail underground but we have built up experience over many trips!) We soon emerged from James Street station and onto the most iconic landscape of the River Mersey, the Pier Head. The route from the Pier Head runs south along the promenade passing the Albert Dock, the Echo Arena, the marina, and the Festival Gardens, a lot of easy riding though not without some cobblestones, all the way to Otterspool Promenade. A drinks-stop at



Pier Head, Liverpool



Active Adventures provided a chance for us to cast our eyes over the next leg of the route. Ahead of us, Garston Docks and Liverpool Airport present a real barrier to passage by bike along the river and an alternative route was needed to also avoid the busy roads. Once again public transport provided a safe route by train from Aigburth Station to Hunts Cross, which we easily managed. A short ride on road followed to the Halewood Triangle to pick up the trail that we would largely follow to the end, the Transpennine Trail (TPT), NCN62. The TPT is a 215-mile trail for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders that crosses England from Southport near the River Mersey in the west to Hornsea near the River Humber in the east.

The TPT is well-signposted but on a bicycle it can be very easy to miss one of the many twists and turns. We cycled through Speke and, with the noise of jet aeroplanes



overhead, emerged onto Hale Road and also found ourselves quite suddenly leaving Merseyside and crossing over into Cheshire. It surprises many people to see Cheshire begin just a few yards from Speke! The ride down into Hale Village is on -road but does not present any major problems and soon we found ourselves alongside the giant bronze statue of Hale's most famous resident, John Middleton, the Childe of Hale, said to have been the tallest person that ever lived at a height of 9' 3". Riding out of Hale Village, we cycled past the Hale Duck Decoy, one of only three traditional decoys left in the UK,



John Middleton

before turning right down into Pickering's Pasture to meet the river once more.

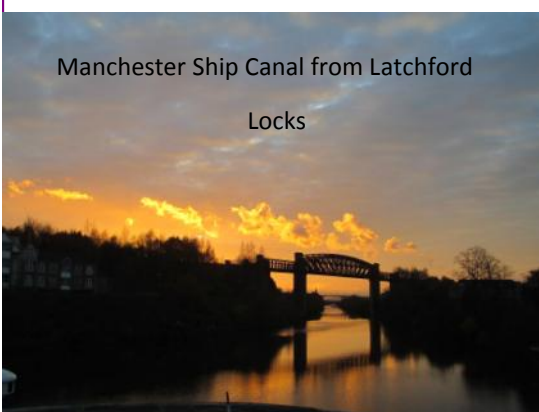
Our next objective was now clearly in sight, the Silver Jubilee Bridge crossing the river at the Runcorn Gap. Passing by the industrial landscape of Ditton chemical works and climbing the zig-zags over Ditton Brook, it wasn't long before we soon rode under the famous bridge and entered Widnes. It was now lunchtime and we had earned a welcome stop by the Catalyst Museum as we met up with our Leader Support Team.

After lunch, we set off on our next leg from Spike Island along the old Sankey Canal, which parallels the river. The landscape of the river now changes from estuary to mudflats and we soon arrive at one of the old ferry crossing points of the river, Fiddler's Ferry, with now just the Ferry Tavern dominated by the cooling towers of the nearby power station. It's now very noticeable how narrow the river has become as we approach Warrington, crossing the Sankey Brook and the Bank Quay marshes, as the river loops around in large meanders. Crossing Chester Road, we soon arrive in Wilderspool and meet another aquatic feature that we will be following for a while, the Manchester Ship Canal.

While the Mersey meanders through Warrington town centre to Woolston, our route now follows the Ship Canal. This 125-year old inland waterway connects Manchester to the Mersey estuary at Eastham Locks. After many years of decline the waterway is coming to life again as new harbours are opened to provide some green-relief to heavy traffic on our roads. We ride on the cycle path alongside the canal, passing every now and then one of the many swing bridges that unite the different parts of Warrington. Passing under an old railway bridge, we reach our next stop, Latchford Locks. Used only infrequently these days, the locks here comprise a large ocean-going ship lock and a smaller coaster/tug lock. We crossed over and met our support team once again.



Runcorn Bridge



Manchester Ship Canal from Latchford Locks

We then began the last leg of our first day's journey. That old railway bridge we passed under used to carry the Warrington-Altrincham Railway but is now an excellent trail/cycle path that heads directly east, sandwiched between the Ship Canal and Bridgewater Canal, towards Lymm. The short winter day was now drawing in on the team and it was full speed ahead through Thelwall, passing under the M6 motorway, to Lymm. Meeting up with the support team once more, we decided that there was just enough daylight to push on to Heatley near Dunham Massey to end the first day's ride.

It was a tired team of scouts that cycled into Heatley just on 5pm, but one that was excited to have met its primary objective and reached Heatley. Within ten minutes we had all our team and gear packed away in the support vehicles and we were off to our camp for the night, Dunham Park Scout Camp, the county campsite of Greater Manchester West Scouts.

Dunham Park Scout Camp is situated on the National Trust's Dunham Massey estate. In such a rural setting it's not easy to believe that we are now just 12 miles from Manchester city centre and next door to a famous deer park. Our home for the night was the small but cosy Blanshard Cabin and the luxury of gas central heating was most welcome. We had a great

evening at Dunham, cooking our expedition meal and also enjoying a rare winter camp fire, before we settled down for the night.

Next morning it was up early to a hearty breakfast! Outside the weather looked fair once again, though a little more overcast. Soon we were packed up and on the road again to Heatley to rejoin the trial where we had left off the night before.

The first part of our second day's journey once again saw us riding the Warrington-Altrincham railway cycle trail, however,



we soon left the cycle trail and had to tackle the difficult navigation on a mixture of small lanes and paths west of Timperley, heading north to Carrington, where just afterwards we rejoined the River Mersey. Since we last saw the river, it had joined with the Ship Canal and then branched off to follow its natural course to Ashton-on-Mersey. It was here at the bridge over the Aston Weir that we once again made friends with our aquatic guide. Our route now stays close to the river, much narrower now than before, as we cycle through a green corridor through an area of old water meadows and

pastures that are locally called 'Ees'. Only in the background can we hear the hum of traffic on the M60 rushing towards nearby Trafford Retail Park. Excellent trails and paths lead us south west to Sale Water Park and a meet with the Leader Support Team at Jackson's Bridge. The River Mersey is now a small river barely 25 metres wide, running quite slowly as it meanders through the golf courses and water parks on the outskirts of Manchester.

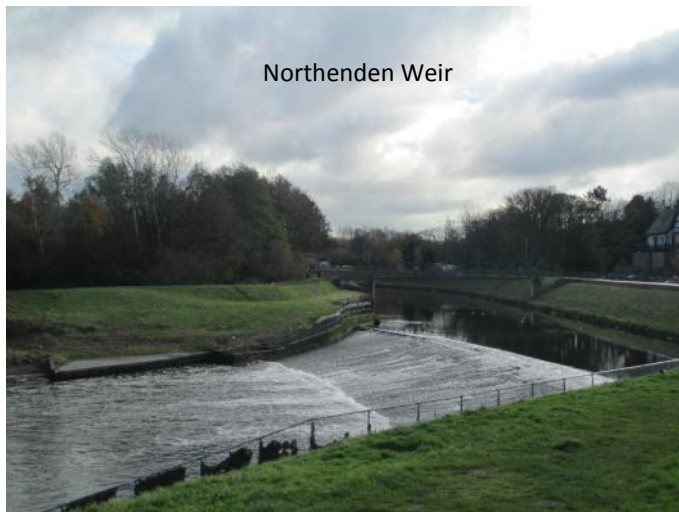


Jackson's Bridge, Chorlton.

We're now nearly on the final stretch. We continue to follow the river and we have a short stop once again at the big Northenden Weir. The team now takes a diversion from the river, which meanders a lot in this area, and heads into the suburbs of Didsbury. We soon pick up the cycle track that runs alongside the Metrolink, pass the terminus at East

Didsbury, and drop down once more to meet the Mersey at Burnage by the rugby club. The end of our journey is almost in sight as we follow the cycle path by the river into Stockport and soon arrive at a notable landmark, the Co-op Pyramid.

The river is now starting to disappear for some stretches and when we reach the Mersey Way Shopping Centre it disappears completely into a massive culvert under the town. We are now really in a town-centre environment as we cycle and walk our bikes through town and the masses of early Christmas shoppers to finally find a narrow, easily missed, cobbled street that leads down to an underpass of the M60 in Tiviot Dale. Suddenly the river emerges and we find we have reached the source of the Mersey as from under the M60 emerges the River Tame and from under the main road emerges the River Goyt. The River Mersey begins in a rather sad and unlikely place for such a great river in the meeting of its tributaries, the Rivers Tame and Goyt, almost buried beneath the concrete of a modern town centre. And what did we find at the source of the River Mersey? Some treasure, or maybe a long lost urban jungle tribe, or majestic waterfall!!!? No, we found what we expected to find at the source of the River Mersey (sadly): two shopping trolleys abandoned in the



Northenden Weir



river!

After hurrying back into Stockport town to load up bikes and kit, we were soon off to rendezvous with parents and the County and District Commissioners for the award presentations. An underpass in Stockport isn't the best place for award presentations so, as our expeditionary 'voyage' up the Mersey had now 'sailed into port', what better place to 'weigh anchor' than at the HMS Conway anchor at the Maritime Museum in Liverpool? As we pulled back into the Albert Dock we were met by a crowd of parents and family members. As the sun set and our sea to source journey ended, the eight cycling scout members of our expedition team were presented with their Expedition Challenge Awards by Brian Tucker, West Wirral DC. Furthermore, four of us receiving these awards had now also completed the Chief Scouts Gold Award, with which they were presented by Alan Seeley, Merseyside CC.

Our journey of 60-miles along the route of the River Mersey was an amazing cycle ride, especially as in such an urban and industrialised area, most of the cycling is off-road on tracks, cycle paths and old railways. Surprisingly, for a river steeped in industrial history we found much of the way was along promenades, quiet estuary paths, towpaths, and country lanes (and the odd busy shopping street!) Only in a few places does the route enter towns and you wouldn't guess that you were on an urban trail riding across north Cheshire countryside. This is a great route for a cycle expedition, safe with the majority of the route being off-road riding, with lots of interesting places along the way. The route can be cycled either way, but west to east has the advantage of the prevailing wind at your back. The signposting is good but you will still need to have, and be able to read, a good strip-map of the route as it can be easy to miss the winding ways through the suburban areas.

A great advantage of this route is that it's on our doorstep! Travel to the start is measured in minutes and from Stockport it's an easy route along the motorway in under an hour. It is possible to complete the expedition in a totally green way, using public transport and leaving the cars at home. (Though our team was largely self-reliant, it did need a support team in case of emergencies and to carry some of the heavier kit items that would make cycling difficult if carried.)

Dunham Park Scout Camp is ideally situated 35-miles along the way from New Brighton and has good facilities. There is also a smaller district campsite at Grappenhall, near Lymm, beside the Bridgewater Canal. The TPT can be started earlier from Southport and can be continued on up the Rivers Tame and Etherow to the Pennines, though you shouldn't underestimate

the distance. Many troops struggle to run expeditions these days. Maybe it's because they think of wild country areas further away or overlook cycling routes because of road safety concerns. Not so! Many of the great expedition routes for scouts lie right on our doorstep, passing quietly through our towns and villages, linking our green spaces in corridor-routes. Sometimes we look too far afield and overlook what discoveries can be made in our neighbourhood!

We are now busy planning our next urban cycle expedition, another river route along the Lea Navigation to the Thames in London. But if you're looking for one nearer home, we would highly recommend the Sea to Source urban cycling expedition along the River Mersey!

Jack, Rosie, Alex, Emily, Greg, Steph, Olly and James, 1st Barnston Scouts Expedition Team

Bill Mankin & Dave Wright, Leader Support Team

Maps by Dave Gorman, GSL



The Activity Centre Number Club Draw

The draw has taken place and the winners are:-

February

1st Tony Twemlow

2nd Steve & Ruth Wynn

3rd Chris Hughes

4th Thomas Richardson

Their cheques are in the post

Congratulations

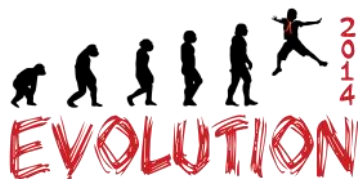
So have you got your numbers yet?

If you don't have your numbers yet contact

Christine Kenyon

0151 677 1820

christine.kenyon@talktalk.net



We're well into rehearsals and we've even done our first performance! Thanks for the invite to perform at the Scout Post presentation evening. We had a great time and we hope that everyone enjoyed it.

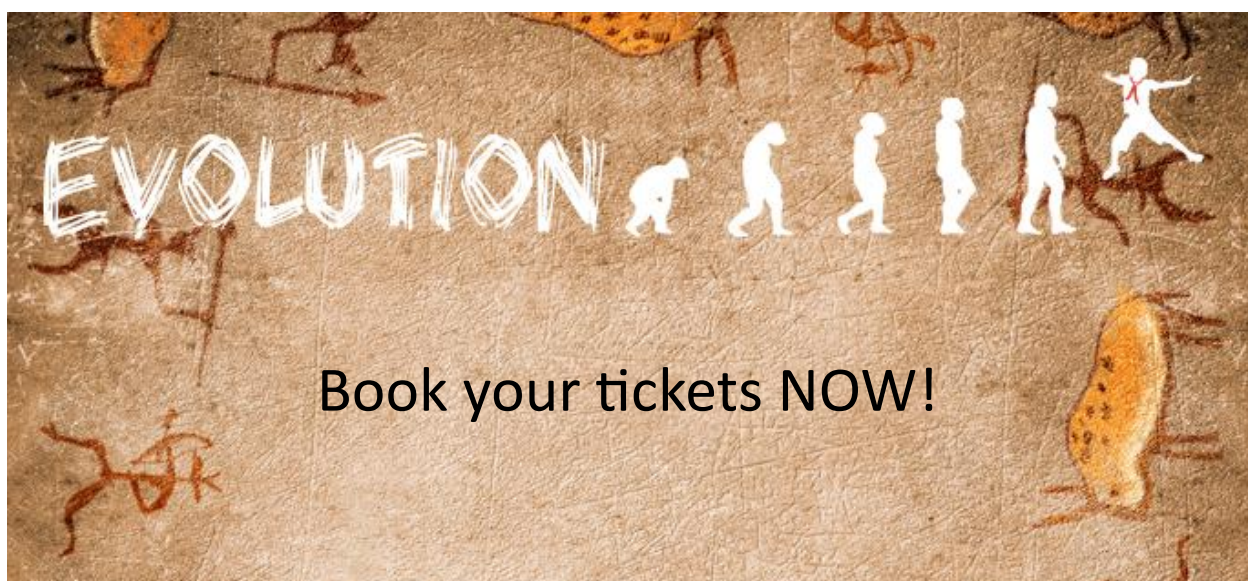
We had a great day in the Gladstone Theatre on Saturday 8th Feb, we could start to see how everything will fit together and it was great for the cast to get on the stage and to get a feel for the theatre. On the Sunday we welcomed the DC to our normal rehearsal, it was great to see him and relieve him of some money for raffle tickets!

'Evolution' takes place at 7.30pm from Thursday 27th to Saturday 29th March 2014 with a 2.30pm Matinee on Saturday 29th at The Gladstone Theatre in Port Sunlight Village.

Tickets are available by calling 07905 534906 or by completing the booking form on the website www.wwgangshow.org.uk We hope you like the photos and videos of the past shows on there, but you may not know that you can also find West Wirral Gang Show on Facebook and Twitter! You can find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/wwgangshow> and on twitter @wwgangshow

We look forward to welcoming you for a walk through the ages at one of the shows.

Andy Longstaff



Dates for your Diary

2013

March

4	1st Barnston's AGM		
20	Cub Poster competition final	6 th Heswall	18.30
27/29	District Gang Show (evening)	Gladstone Theatre	19.30
29	District Gang Show (matinee)	Gladstone Theatre	14.30

April

5	Beaver Day outing	Martin Mere	
5	District Cub Outing	Chester Zoo	
27	St. George's Day Parade		
28	CSL's meeting	St Andrews	20.30
29	District Executive	DHQ	19.45

May

8	DISTRICT AGM	Heswall Hall	19.15
10/11	Cub Skills Day	1 st Thurstaston	

June

7	1 st Thurstaston's AGM		
13/15	Cub Camp	Sandiways	
17	GSL's meeting	DHQ	20.00
21	2 nd West Kirby's AGM		
28	Beaver Sports Day	TBA	

July

16	ADC's meeting	DHQ	20.00
24	District Executive	DHQ	19.45

August

September

10	ADC's meeting	DHQ	20.00
17	District Executive	DHQ	19.45
26/28	Cub Camp	Queen Charlotte Wood	

The Editor's Bit.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this months newsletter, I am sure that our readers will find many items of interest as they flick through the pages.

On a technical note, I still prefer to have your articles as WORD files with any photographs sent separately from the text. Word Documents with embedded photographs are useable but sometimes restrict me if I have to alter the layout of the newsletter. Also Leaders quite often spend a lot of time producing well designed documents in PDF format, using different coloured text fonts, and embedded photographs. These PDF files limit my ability to edit text and do not reproduce well when we print off black & white copies for people who do not have e.mail facilities.

Eddie.

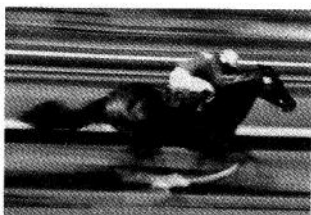
**Note: Last copy date for the next Newsletter is
10th March 2014**



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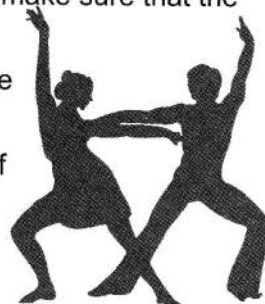
RACENIGHTSRUS

Race nights are fun, exciting and a great way to raise money for any reason. Servicing the North West of England , we aim to provide the complete race night service and will supply everything you need to make your event a great success. A well put together race night is tremendous fun for everyone especially if raising money for charity or associations.



To book a disco/karaoke call 07960 388144
or email racenightsrus@ntlworld.com

Mobile discos and Karaoke for all occasions, Music to Suit All Tastes, Fantastic Light Show and Smoke Machine, Highly Recommended. Not only do we want to make sure you & your guests have a great night, we also want to make sure that the Mobile Disco or Karaoke Disco you hire from us is worry free, and that you, and all of your guests, have a night that you will



To book a disco/karaoke call 07983 626045
or email racenightsrus@ntlworld.com