

Scouts through the years



Church Parade 1990s

The 1st Hampton Hill Sea Scouts were not registered until 1925 although they were inaugurated in 1919. In 1925 they were holding their weekly meetings in the Church Room and attending church parade on the last Sunday in the month. Ten years later donations were sought by Revd Harvey towards the purchase of a barge for their headquarters. The required sum was eventually raised and the sea scouts moved from the Church Room to their waterborne quarters which they named 'The Venture'. This was moored by Hampton Water Works. Many years later the sea scouts severed their connection with St James's.

The 1st Hampton Hill Cub Pack was inaugurated in 1927 and, in appealing for support for a bazaar in aid of the pack funds, the vicar drew attention to the good work being done amongst the small boys of the parish. In December, 1929, we read that *"The cubs are on the prowl once more, gathering old clothes and toys, etc., to send to distressed miners' families in Wales."*

From 1931 to 1934 the 2nd Hampton Hill Scout Troop was in existence, connected with the Nonconformist Church. During the Second World War the scout movement in the village was non-existent, possibly due to lack of leaders.

The 3rd Hampton Hill Scouts (St James's) was registered in 1948 by Stan Childs and George Casey (hence the name of the current scout headquarters, The George Stanley Hall). This was a 'Sponsored Troop' and the vicar, the Revd Brunt, as sponsoring authority, was directly concerned with its administration. In 1951 the 3rd Hampton Hill Cub Pack was formed and in 1953 the 3rd Hampton Hill Scout Group came into being, thus making the area a staunch stronghold of the scout movement.

The first penny party organised by the St James's Troop was held at Wayside in 1955 and the amazing sum of £32 was raised towards the St James's Building Fund. The following year another party was held, also very successful. Emboldened by the success of these smaller ventures in 1957 the scout troop held their first full scale fete in the spacious grounds of Laurel Dene. Led by the Kingston District Scout Band, the boys marched through the village to the fete grounds where proceedings were opened by the Mayor of the Borough of Twickenham.



The Cubs taking part in the church Jubilee concert 1977

A direct outcome of the scout movement within the Church was the formation of the scout group committee, a body of parents and friends who met regularly once a month in order to promote social and money-raising functions for the benefit of the group. One of the most popular social functions was the cubs' parents' evenings when the boys gave displays of their work, and the interest sustained at these meetings led many people on to the scout group committee. Most years the boys themselves took part in a show and Christmas carol singing was one of the activities. The committee organised many dances and socials and altogether the scout group made quite an impact on the social life of Hampton Hill.



The Cubs in the Hampton Carnival procession 1979

When in 1958 the precarious state of the finances of the parish hall were under consideration and the PCC called a meeting of all the organisations to see what could be done to save the hall, the scout group offered to take over its running as their headquarters. The documents were signed in February 1960, leasing the hall to the scout group for ten years. Many weekend working parties of parents and scouters soon brought about a complete transformation of the parish hall into an attractively decorated scout headquarters which became the venue of many interesting and enjoyable functions organised by both the church social committee and the scout committee, thereby doing much to enrich the social life of Hampton

Hill. Like the purely girls' groups, the scouts attended church parades on the first Sunday of the month.

For most of its life the Group met in the Parish Church Hall in School Road (now The Greenwood Centre) or on 'the triangle' then owned by British Rail and let to 3rd Hampton Hill under License from about 1970. This area was used for general outdoor activities or when the hall was not appropriate. When the Parish Hall was sold and redeveloped as The Greenwood Centre the Group transferred to Hampton Hill Junior School in Windmill Road.

In 1972 an old caravan was placed on the triangle to store equipment. In 1976 the group erected a prefabricated garage, prefabricated concrete single storey hall which was used in the spring, summer and autumn for some section meetings, events and activities. The caravan was replaced by an old porta-cabin. British Rail auctioned the land in 1990. Despite many pledges of help the scouts lost the land but stayed on as tenants to the new owner, living in hope that one day the land would be theirs. Fortunately the new owner was refused planning permission and so the scouts purchased the land with a grant from the Hampton Fuel Allotment Trust. The site is now held 'in trust' for the Scout Group by a set of Trustees.

The group held many social functions at 'The Triangle' until that fateful night on Friday 6th March 1992 when the arsonists struck and the building and contents were all but destroyed. The Group, battered and bruised, carried on. Their numbers increased and hovered at around the 100 mark. All members of the Group were very active in District and County activities. One of the main challenges in front of the group was to seek planning permission for a new scout hut and to build it as soon as possible. Thanks to an unstoppable team headed by John Nielsen the new Headquarters, The George Stanley Hall was officially opened in January 1998 by The Mayor of Richmond-upon-Thames (Councilor) Maureen Woodriff and the Group Scout Leader John Nielsen. This was helped once again funded by the Hampton Fuel Allotment Trust.



St George's Day Parade in the early 2000s

The group rebuilt its headquarters but nothing is certain and trouble hit the group in the Spring of 2002. The Group was facing a crisis – very few Leaders, dwindling support from parents and no functioning Group Executive Committee. Closure was a real possibility. Thankfully the addition of a new Cub and Beaver Leader, kept them going. In the Autumn of 2002 a new Executive Committee was formed, and so they were in much better shape. This has allowed them to continue giving the Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers all the opportunities they deserve.

With increased numbers of both Young People and Adults they were able to open a Second Cub Scout Pack which had its first meeting on 21 April 2004. The two packs were named as 'Nevis' and 'Snowdon'. They opened a Second Scout Troop which had its first meeting on Tuesday 11th November 2008. The names of the two Troops are 'Claws' and 'Talons'.



Beavers in the Fun Day race at Walton Firs in 1995



Building a Scout Hut to replace the one burnt down in 1997



Cubs in the Hampton Carnival procession 1979