

# FOSSnews

The Newsletter of the Friends of Strathaven Scouts

## Successes and Challenges in 2010



Scouts and Explorers prepared to get wet! Ready for gorge walking on Arran.

The last year of Strathaven Scouting has included some wonderful activities as ever. However, it has also brought challenges, particularly from a leadership perspective.

Both Beaver and Cub sections are thriving with colonies and packs which are full to bursting. As ever they have had a fun, activity packed year.

The Scout troop has had a busy year of activities, with highlights being the annual Lochearnhead weekend, which I am reliably informed was the best ever, and a spectacular summer camp to Glen Sannox on the Isle of Arran. The leaders have been ably assisted by both the Young Leader Team of Explorers and parent helpers, but leadership is reaching crisis point, of which more later.

The Explorers, unlike much of the population, enjoyed the cold conditions, racking up an impressive list of mountain ascents.

Although no foreign section trips ran in 2010 the year was not without its international experiences. Six Strathaven Scouts and Explorers attended the 32nd Blair Atholl International Jamborette and played host to Scouts from Hong Kong and Norway. In addition four Explorer Scouts completed their Explorer Belt Expedition in Germany, one of the highlights of any Explorer's time in Scouting.

It has been a busy year for FOSS too. The annual reunion weekend went 'abroad' for the first time, travelling to Kentmere in the Lake District for what proved an excellent weekend. The RS50

saw its best ever turn out and plans are now well under way for what is to be, unbelievably, the 10th RS50 next year.

FOSS Adventure Section has had a full year with long weekends in both the Peak District and Wales, the latter moving to Bolton after the heavens opened and Wales became a bit of a swamp.

In addition my own personal highlight of the year involved three FOSSAS members, myself included, running the Budapest International Marathon in September. My thanks must go to Duncan Campbell for instigating the crazy idea and pushing things forward through our training and onwards. I found it a slightly surreal, challenging, painful, emotional and hugely rewarding experience.

I mustn't forget to mention Iain Park receiving a Silver Wolf, Scouting's highest accolade. The profile in this edition shows just what remarkable service Iain has given the Group over the years.

However, setting aside all of these successes, it is with concern that I hear that the Scout troop is in critical need of leaders, and has been on the verge of folding more than once this year. It is only with the support and experience of good leaders that the members can continue to enjoy the exciting range of activities that they currently do.

So a plea, if you or anybody you know can offer any support at all to the troop, or take a leadership position, please get in touch with Group Scout Leader Stuart Ferguson. I know from personal experience how rewarding leadership can be, so if you are even remotely tempted, then please take that final step.

Matthew McVeigh

### CONTENTS

- 1 Triumphs and Challenges in 2010
- 2 Explorers End Year on a High
- 3 Beaver Colony Report
- 4 Scout Troop Faces Tough Times
- 5 Explorer Unit Review 2010

- 6 Explorer Belt in the Black Forest
- 7 Blair Atholl International Jamborette
- 8-9 Glen Sannox Summer Camp
- 10 Reunion Weekend in Kentmere
- 11 More Adventures for FOSSAS

- 12 FOSSAS Budapest Marathon
- 13 RS50 2010 Report
- 14 An Experience with HHI in India
- 15 Iain Park Awarded Silver Wolf
- 16 News and Events Round Up

# Explorers End Year on a High

The Explorer Scouts' annual trip north provides excellent winter weather for climbing and adventure.

The 1st Strathaven Explorer Scouts ended 2009, and what had been a very active year for the Unit, with an extremely successful few days in Lochaber after Christmas.

Members of the Group, Scouts, Venture Scouts and Explorers have enjoyed the use of Bertha's cottage in Roybridge at Christmas and New Year for over 25 years but without doubt this year's party experienced finer winter conditions on the hills than on any of the previous occasions. Given the weather we were fortunate also in being able to negotiate the journey to the north without difficulty.

Six Explorers and three leaders made the trip and stayed at the Roybridge base for three days. Access to the hills was difficult due to most of the side roads being impassible.

Beinn Teallach to the north of Loch Laggan was climbed on the first day. Although this is the lowest of all the 283 Munros the deep snow made for quite a tough ascent. However the fine views of the winter landscape made up for the hard work involved in getting to the summit.

There was a little added excitement, and a lesson learned, when one of the



*Explorers on the summit of one Britain's highest, Aonach Mor, with Ben Nevis behind.*

party exhibited signs of mild hypothermia at the summit. With prompt attention, some energizing nourishment, added clothing and a quick descent he quickly recovered.

The second day was even better and an ascent of Aonach Mor was accomplished, with the use of the Ski Centre Gondola making for a slightly less strenuous day. There were magnificent views of the north face of Ben Nevis from this summit.

On the third day the party enjoyed a walk up Glen Nevis to visit Steall Waterfall in the upper glen. This is a fine and slightly challenging walk for tourists at any time of the year and on this occasion the walk through the gorge required great care. The views were magnificent and the boys had the added enjoyment of being able to ascend up the frozen river.

The accompanying photograph of Robert, Calum and Lawrence was published in one of the Scotsman



*Robert, Calum and Lawrence enjoying a walk up Glen Nevis river gorge in superb Scottish winter conditions.*

Newspaper winter photography supplements.

All in all a thoroughly enjoyable outing for the Explorers and one which whetted their appetites for more outings to the hills, especially in such conditions. Subsequent days out for members of the Unit as the hard winter continued, included climbs of Ben Ime, Ben Ghlas, Beinn Chabhar and the Treig Munros in Lochaber (see additional photos on page 5).

# Beaver Colony Report

Both Beaver Colonies are full to bursting and have had a fun filled year. Fiona Campbell ('Mrs C') fills us in.

**W**e have had yet another year full of fun and adventure, games and chocolate, messy stuff and yummy stuff. The two sections on a Thursday have been running at full capacity this year with 18 boys in each.

Badge work has been carried out by all the boys and we found time to build Lego models and a volcano as part of our creative badge. Mrs Miller came along with all the bits and pieces to help the boys to create their own erupting volcano. It was a very successful evening and, thankfully, the Cubs were not in that night as the smell of vinegar was rather strong. Could we have sparked off an interest in science for the future?

Halloween was another great success this year, with old fashioned games of dooking for apples, syrup muffins and

then straight into the sugarpuffs for a jelly baby, what a mess! Explorer Scouts, Colin Ogilvie, Robert Kerr and Fraser Porte, in their capacity as Young Leaders, have been great. They do, I am sure, enjoy the games and food as much as the Beavers. Philip Grady, who has joined me in the early session this year, has proved to be a big success with the boys, helping them to achieve their healthy eating badge in October.

The Explorer Scouts last year brought along some of the Group's tents and we had a campfire night with hotdogs, hot chocolate, and marshmallows; just a taste of what the Beavers can look forward to when they go up to Cubs.

The summer party this year was held at the airfield. We had a glorious evening with well over 70 Beavers - from not only

our own Colony - mums, dads, sisters and brothers who came there to join in the fun. Activities and games including water balloons, water carrying, soaking the Explorers and Mrs C, parachute fun, tug of war and races in teams. This was followed by burgers, sausages and lots of other goodies, the presentation of the Aircraft badge and then it was all over for another year.

At the Executive AGM Douglas Hay and Findlay Cook came along and explained in their own way what Beavers meant to them talking about team games, party nights and badges.

This year we have more parties to look forward to, badge work to be done, knots to be tied and untied, haggis to be eaten and who knows what else! One thing is for sure, we will have lots of fun.



TOP LEFT & RIGHT: Messy fun making volcanoes with Mrs Miller. BELOW LEFT & RIGHT: Dooking in sugar puffs and Halloween games

# Scout Troop Faces Tough Times

Iain Park describes both challenges that have faced the Troop in 2010 and successful activities.



*Scouts presented with their Cyclist Activity Badges having successfully completed the RS50.*

This report on the Scout Section might well have had a black band surrounding it and been written in the form of an obituary.

The Troop had to close down for six weeks after the summer holidays, not for lack of boys but for the lack of leaders. This is the only time in the Troop's long history that this has happened apart from towards the end of the 1st World War.

That it has re-opened is primarily thanks to Graham MacCall who these days is working away from home and could not attend on a Thursday evening. He agreed to return as leader if the meeting night was changed to a Friday, and only if other leaders could be found to assist.

This has happened and two Scout parents, Graeme Marsh and Kenny Blair, have risen to the challenge and along with existing assistant leader Alison Woodcock, are now supporting Graham on Friday nights.

Sincere thanks are due to Chris Baird who has given invaluable service to the Troop over the past three years,

but has had to leave to concentrate on his studies and his career. We wish him success in both of these.

The Scouts have returned with renewed enthusiasm and the Troop strength is around 40. However, potential Scouts are still being turned away. The lack of sufficient leaders means that the Group is still unable to restart a second Scout Troop which is badly needed.

The Troop, prior to its temporary demise, had a very good year, climaxed by the very successful camp at Sannox in Arran. Strathaven Scouts last held a summer camp on the same site in 1956.

The visit to Lochearnhead in February was voted one of the best of the annual visits to this Scout Centre. Around thirty Scouts, Leaders and Parent helpers attended and carried out the usual indoor and outdoor activities. The latter including some great hill climbing, in various groups according to their capabilities, in the superb late winter landscape.

The Scouts gave marvelous support to the Round Strathaven 50 this year. Seven

boys, aged from just 12 to 14, completed the 50 miles route in really excellent times. Seven of the younger boys and one girl, 10 year old Niabh McCall, tackled the 15 miles along with their families.

The photograph shows all 15 of them after the presentation to some of them of their Cyclist Activity Badges which their performances on the RS50 helped them to achieve.

**Scouting in Strathaven can only survive with the support of good leaders. Many leaders are parents of Scouts or have been youth members themselves. However, neither is a prerequisite!**

Leaders are provided with training tailored to their existing skills and potential needs. Everybody has something to give and something to gain. Leadership is an extremely rewarding experience.

If you are interested in leadership, please contact Group Scout Leader Stuart Ferguson at:

[stuart69@madasafish.com](mailto:stuart69@madasafish.com)

# Explorer Unit Review 2010

Iain Park reviews the current state of the Unit and activities over the last year.

After a record breaking year in 2009 numbers are down with the loss of those who suddenly became too old and have left for University or are working elsewhere. However there is a very healthy current membership of 14 Explorers.

The visit to Bertha's at the end of last year is reported elsewhere in the newsletter. That enthused a number of the Explorers to make the most of the fine winter conditions on the hills in the early months of the year and some fine days out on Beinn Ime, Beinn Ghlas and Bheinn a Chabhair followed.

Climbing has continued as a regular activity over the year and the photographs show some of the fine weather which we enjoyed.

There was no Unit expedition this summer but most members took part in either the Explorer Belt Trip to southern Germany, the Blair Athol International Jamborette or the Troop Camp at Sannox in Arran. A report on Blair Athol is elsewhere in the newsletter. The Explorers in Arran forming the YLT (Young Leaders Team) carried out sterling work in support of the adult team and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Jonathan Grady, Chris Kennedy, Lewis Ferguson and George Elliot were the four Explorers who followed in the footsteps of many of their predecessors in the Unit and undertook their Explorer Expedition

in August in southern Germany. They successfully completed a 100 mile hike over ten days and carried out the ten minor projects which had been set them by the Unit as well as their own chosen main project. This was to compare the types and scale of renewable energy between Scotland and the Black Forest area and investigate the differences in government policy and public attitude to renewable energy and sustainable power. They were assisted in Germany by a German Scout Leader, Katrin, who arranged for the Explorers to visit and stay for three days at the end of their trip at an International Camp in Bavaria.

Jonathan concluded his report on the expedition with the following enthusiastic comment, "It was genuinely one of the most fantastic experiences ever and definitely a brilliant way to finish our Strathaven Explorers career. It's a chance to meet so many fantastic people and really get to know a country beyond what's offered on a package holiday. It's something which all the younger Explorers should certainly think about doing."

The four are due to receive their coveted Explorer Belts at Clyde Region's awards evening in November in the Glasgow City Chambers.

We have been unfortunate to lose the services of Unit leader Niall Geraghty who has gone off to continue his stud-

ies at Cambridge University. Following in the steps of older brother Tim, Niall filled the role ideally and will be greatly missed. The thanks of the Explorers and of the Group are due to Niall for his enthusiasm and commitment over the past three years.

Stuart Scott has taken over the role of Leader supported by Iain Park, and strenuous efforts are being made to find another leader to augment the team

Plans are afoot for the Unit to go back to Zambia next year to carry out further work on behalf of Health Help International. Apart from the problems of financing this venture it would also require a strong leader team but serious consideration will be given to this over the next two months. In the meantime, as a start to fund raising, we have signed up to take part in the Ragbag scheme and will be collecting clothing, shoes etc over the coming months.



*Explorers and leaders at Bertha's Cottage.*



**LEFT:** Explorer Harris Douglas fending off the cold on the Lawers Group with Meall nan Tarmachan behind.  
**RIGHT:** Niall Geraghty on Beinn Ime in superb winter conditions.

# Explorer Belt in the Black Forest

Chris Kennedy reports on his Explorer Belt Hike, one of the highlights of his time in Scouting.



**ABOVE:** Chris, Jonathan and George at the Solar Info Centre.

**LEFT:** The Explorer Belt team: George Elliot, Jonathan Grady, Lewis Ferguson and Chris Kennedy.

At five in the morning on the 10th August 2010, four of Strathaven's Explorer Scouts raised their heads from their familiar Strathaven pillows for the last time for two weeks. Jonathan Grady, Lewis Ferguson, George Elliot and I were beginning their long journey to the Black Forest in Germany for a rip-roaring adventure involving hiking, camping and, of course, gross over use of our only (and totally useless) German phrase, "Die sonne schien in einem wolkenlosen himmel" ("the sun shone in a cloudless sky").

The Explorer Belt is one of the highlights of any Explorer's career and involves planning and partaking in a 100 mile hike in a foreign country, learning about the different culture along the way. The route was pre-planned, ish. Basel was to be the start and Konstanz the end. The middle was the adventure.

On arrival in Basel, on the Swiss, German and French border, we checked into the YMCA hostel (yes, it was fun to stay at) and headed out for a celebratory pint, or half litre being on the continent. There was a feeling of adventure sitting on the balcony over the unfamiliar city and opening the package containing our hitherto unknown minor projects. These were a series of tasks to be completed over the course of the next ten days, designed to help us experience the culture of Germany and meet people. They ranged from learning a local dance to cooking haggis and feeding it to unsuspecting locals.

The next day we met Katrin Kelly, the person who made the trip possible by

agreeing to be our emergency contact in Germany. It is generally agreed that Katrin was an utter legend. It was due to the endless efforts of Iain Park that Katrin was contacted, one of the innumerable things he did which made the trip possible, for which we are very grateful.

Spirits high we started walking, in completely the wrong direction. With a little help from the locals the right path was found and all was well. Little did we know it, but our first campsite was to be one of the best, even though we were actually camped in the field next to it as it was full. There was no mention of 'silent time' a.k.a. 'I'll chuck you out the wash room and won't let you hang all your wet clothes up' time, as was found in a later campsite.

In the morning there was much complain from residents of both tents about George's mulish snoring. On top of this the train we were supposed to catch sailed calmly by the campsite and we were sent into a state of 'rage wan' (a state of anger higher than rage two or three, obviously). The day's walking was largely uneventful if very wet.

The next night was spent camping by the side of Lake Schluchsee and was a very important night for the team. It was fajita night! Vegetables were bought, fajita mix was replaced by pasta sauce, cheese was grated and salsa was added. We are eternally grateful to our retiring Explorer leader, Niall Geraghty, partly because he made most of our activities for the past few years (including this one) possible, but mainly

because he introduced us to the beauty of the fajita.

Morale was consequently high the next morning. After a quick game of 'deck tennis', walking began. The weather was beautiful and the route was through rolling countryside which made for highly enjoyable hiking, even if it did take longer than anticipated. We were glad to reach the campsite after the long day and were greeted there, to our mild discomfort, by a rather touchy-feely owner who showed us to our pitch while trying to ensure that we were "warm enough". There we met a couple who were pleased to enlighten us that 'Pfand' was not a 'foreigner tax', as we had assumed when it appeared on numerous receipts from shops, but a returnable recycling charge.

The next part of the trip was spent in Switzerland, where everything seemed to go wrong, from the weather to cheap cooking oil (it turned out to be vinegar). From this sprouted a, probably unfair, general resentment of the entire country.

On our return to German soil we met our favourite person of the trip in the form of a generous campsite owner called Klaus. He saw that it was too windy to pitch tents so allowed us to sleep in the canopy of a caravan which was already set up on site. This provided quantities of space beyond our wildest dreams. We used this to our advantage and cooked our haggis before venturing out and offering it/forcing it upon the residents of the campsite. Of those brave enough to try it, it was generally

well received. Even (by then dubbed 'King') Klaus was up for a taste.

By this point we had left the Black Forest and started to follow the banks of the Rheine to Konstanz. This made for easier walking but also seemed to make people a little less likely to help out as it was a more touristy area. We did not let this get us down, however, and managed to find and organise a meeting with a local mayor as part of a minor project. This proved to be interesting as we gained an overview of how things work in Germany to add to the views learned from individuals.

On arrival in Konstanz, there was a great sense of achievement. Much time was spent basking in the ambience of the motorway around the welcome sign, just because reaching that sign had been the aim for such a long time. On the walk through Konstanz, there were many recitals of our second favourite German phrase, "Wo ist Lidl und Aldi?"

At the beginning of the trip Katrin had invited us to a Scout camp which she ran. We took her up on this generous offer and travelled to Bavaria to the camp at Bucher-Berg. Here we were treated like kings, with three meals made for us each day and a huge black tent to sleep in. Our awe at the fact that a fire could be lit in the middle of it was lessened somewhat after we nearly asphyxiated from the smoke upon giving it a go). The last of the minor projects were also completed at the camp, learning of the camp's song and dance and helping the camp staff to cut trees back which were obscuring their solar panels.

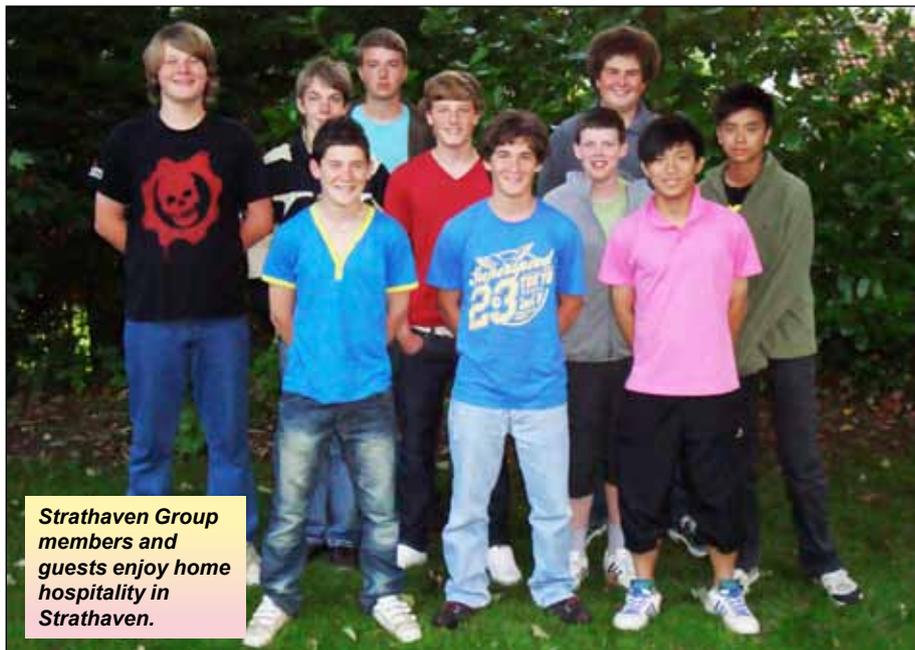
Katrin also recommended that we visit the Documentation Centre in Nuremberg which was definitely worthwhile, giving us a fascinating and moving insight into Germany's wartime history.

We returned to Basel, beginning the long journey home which involved many more hours sitting in airports, many bars of Milka chocolate consumed and tiredness reaching the point of delirium. The journey home was largely uneventful until one of us (we'll call him Georgina to protect his identity) had to have his knife confiscated by armed police in Gatwick airport. This became very amusing after it was confirmed that he wouldn't have to be put in prison.

Although we were glad to return to Strathaven after the trip, we will always cherish the memories of what was a once in a lifetime adventure (and banter session).

# Blair Atholl Camp

Explorer Philip Grady reports on Strathaven Group's participation in the 32nd International Jamboree.



**Strathaven Group members and guests enjoy home hospitality in Strathaven.**

**O**n the 17th of July this year six members from the Strathaven Scout and Explorer sections (Philip Grady, Calum Kerr, Colin Ogilvie, Fraser Porte, Angus Wilson and Robert Kerr) headed up to Blair Atholl to take part in the 32nd International Jamboree.

We went as part of the Clyde Region's unit which in total had seven patrols of six people. However, before the main camp, there were two training camps so that all of us from Clyde could get to know each other a bit better.

At Blair Atholl itself the six of us were split between different patrols and were paired with patrols from Hong Kong and Norway. Fortunately for us our foreign scouts had a pretty good knowledge of English but we did attempt to learn some of their language!

The Scottish patrols arrived a day before the foreign Scouts so that we could set up camp and be ready to welcome our visitors who arrived to the best of Scotland's rain! This didn't dampen our spirits and activities commenced with a fun glo-disco.

The following 10 days were filled with a wide range of activities including gorge walking, canyoning, the infamous Atholl Experience, arts and crafts and cultural events. One of our patrols even won the camp pennant for being the tidiest patrol out of the 72 there, a feat not managed by any previous Clyde patrol (well done Robert and Philip!)

After the camp, home hospitality is offered to the foreign scouts and in Strathaven we welcomed two scouts from Hong Kong and two from Norway who spent a few days seeing some of the sights in and around Strathaven. The photograph shows the 6 of us and our visitors back in Strathaven.



**LEFT TO RIGHT: Calum Kerr, Philip Grady (upper), Robert Kerr and Colin Ogilvie having a blast at the glo-disco.**

## NOTE BY IAIN PARK

Blair Atholl has seen representatives from the Strathaven Scouts over a long number of years taking part as Scouts, Venture Scouts and Explorers. The experience has always made a great impression on them. One of this year's six is reported to have said it was one of his best ever experiences. Strathaven has also contributed in a big way over the years in the running of these camps through the dedicated service of, among others, Jim Murdoch, Roy Naismith and Fraser Dodds.

It is Saturday 7th of August and 7.45am, time to leave for the Scout and Guide Centre. I have agreed to be a parent helper for this summer's Scout Camp at Glen Sannox on the Isle of Arran. I experience a mixture of emotions: excitement (what new activities will I be able to take part in) and apprehension (what will the weather be like, what will the midges be like and what will sleeping under canvas well, nylon really, be like after a considerable time since my own days as a Scout and Venture Scout?) More importantly will I embarrass my son?

Having completed some seriously expert trailer packing (by Jim Kerr et al) on the previous evening, all that remained was to get the boys and the final rucksacks into their allocated parental transports and we were off. Next stop Ardrossan for the ferry to Brodick.

The ferry was very busy, it being Highland Games weekend in Brodick, but the boys were well behaved and no one went astray in the melee of disembarkation. A coach had been organised to shuttle the boys round the coast to the foot of Glen Sannox and it was a pleasant sight to see the pick-up truck and trailer negotiating the narrow path up to the campsite, thus negating the need for us to man-handle the equipment up the 200 metres to our final destination.

The site was ideal with an open area for camp activities as well as secluded areas for each patrol tent and the leader's tent, much better than your usual basic farmer's field. Everyone set-to with the unpacking of the trailer and getting the kit allocated to each patrol.

By 4 pm that first afternoon we could all satisfyingly sit back and view our completed camp; three Icelandic patrol tents (including dining shelters), three hike tents (used as store tents), two toilet tents, two further hike tents for the Explorers, one marquee, one Niger Patrol tent (equipment store), one flag pole and last but not least the fantastic Diablo leaders tent, the height of Scout Camp luxury.

With time in hand before tea it was decided to go for a quick river walk up the river Sannox, starting from the point where the river discharges into the Firth of Clyde and heading up to the campsite. So it was on with wet-suits and away they went. About an hour later they were all safely back and dry warm clothes were the order of the day. Everyone enjoyed themselves with this proving to be a taster of what was to come later in the week.

The next task in hand was evening meal, cooked on open altar fires, no gas burners for us! A great deal of time and effort was put in by everyone throughout the week to enable the breakfasts and evening meals to be cooked this way; be it gathering fuel for the fires, sawing and cutting timber, collecting kindling, organising the lighting of the fires and preparing and cooking the food.

The evening meals were all three course affairs and everyone had a job to do. An adult (assisted by Explorers) went with each Patrol to oversee the cooking and help out those with less experience. It really was a challenge sometimes getting the fire just right. I certainly learned as much as the boys did, having really only cooked on gas stoves at my previous camps. Suffice to say that the

# Glen Sannox S

Parent helper Rob Stevenson vividly brings to life this

meals were hearty and gobbled up, with a few exceptions, by a hungry bunch of thrill seekers tired out from the day's activities.

The first evening saw a wide game (the usual trial of Scouts v Explorers) take place and then after flag down we all congregated around the Red Kites patrol fire to have a hot chocolate, some excellent home baking and a bit of a sing-song. There were not too many complaints when the words "off to bed" were uttered, with more than a few lingering yawns evident already.

Day two dawned and everyone quickly got into the camp morning routine. After this we all went down to the beach to perfect some fire lighting techniques. Lunch followed and it wasn't long before we were all ready for the afternoon's activity, a coastal walk led by Iain Park. While the intrepid Explorers were away on their walk those that remained on site fashioned a deck tennis court from tent poles, sisal and a Badminton net. Also constructed was a shot-put/long-jump arena in readiness for the Athletes badge. After dinner and an energetic game of "bang my pan" it was flag down and another sing song around a roaring camp fire.

Monday arrived and we got stuck into the Athlete Activity Badge. As well as the long jump and shot put, competitors also had to run a 100m sprint in their fastest time possible. I was rather proud of my second place 13.5 seconds, behind the super fit Andrew Robertson, since I was wearing hiking boots!

The afternoon activity was another river walk. Some good rapids and waterfalls were overcome, some which were quite a challenge to the younger boys. To their credit all managed to get to the plateaux further up the glen where the river turned from a surging mass to a placid mountain burn. We headed back the way we came this time with water power to float us down many sections back to camp. All in a very exhilarating and exciting few hours with the added bonus of getting a good wash in the pure, but cold, water.



**The obligatory troop shot at Glen Sannox campsite.**

# Summer Camp

5 years action packed troop summer camp on Arran.

On Tuesday morning we discovered that we had rapidly exhausted our supplies of wood, so the chainsaw was fired up and some dead oak limbs were rapidly made into fire wood. After lunch the boys then all got changed into uniform and we made our way to the bus stop at the foot of the glen.

An afternoon exploring the delights of Brodick had been promised, a chance to spend some pocket money on gifts and presents, although I think it was mostly spent buying up all the cap guns in Arran, judging by the racket at camp later on. Boys will be boys eh?

The weather had been getting steadily windier, which in itself was a blessing as it was keeping the midges away. However Wednesday arrived with low lying mist and slight drizzle. Typical, as this was the day we had planned to scale the heights of Goat Fell (experienced hill walkers and Explorers) and North Glen Sannox (novice walkers). The overcast skies did not deter the two parties as there was a chance that the fresh breeze would chase away the cloud and open up some decent views. So after all preparations were made, the two groups set off.

The Goat Fell team did not waste any time scrambling directly up from the camp site to the ridge leading to North Goat Fell summit. We were soon into the mist and Stuart, with many GPS and map checks, had us all safely on to the path that would eventually take us to the summit itself and then back down to corrie for the transport rendezvous. Our lunch was quickly taken in the shelter of the by now brisk wind, prior to the obligatory photo stop at the top. No time to get cold, we were soon off down the path off the mountain. The other group had had an enjoyable walk up North Glen Sannox, deciding to turn around when the mist and drizzle on the ridge they were on started to make the day unpleasant.

On Thursday, after a morning in camp, it was back into the wet-suits, buoyancy vests and helmets and we were transported the

couple of miles round to the bottom of North Glen Sannox where we were to start our gorge walk. This is, simply put, a river walk on a bigger scale with the prospect of jumping into some deep pools. We all started off by jumping into one of the pools, very invigorating, and then it was follow-my-leader up the gorge. Stuart Scott, the Explorer leader, headed the group. What a fantastic afternoon, the sun came out too! Certainly the highlight of the week for me.

Friday morning was all about breaking camp preparations in readiness for departure the next day. The weather was sunny and warm, ideal for taking down and packing away the scout tents. The boys were to sleep in the marquee that night which proved to be a big hit, I wonder if they got any sleep at all.

Some lashing practice, after lunch resulted in a floating platform being made from tent poles and water canisters. This was man-handled down to the beach where we splashed and had fun in the water. Iain Park and some of the boys had got a camp fire going on the beach and started to cook pancakes, delicious they were too.

Everyone mucked in to get the platform dismantled and then it was a quick change into uniform before the short walk to the Corrie Golf Club, where we were to have our evening meal. I must say it was a pleasure to have a break from the camp fire smoke; all the boys got fairly stuck into their burgers and chips.

Whilst at the club we found out that the village folk of Corrie were having a bonfire/firework evening celebrating a historical event when Vikings were repelled. The village has its own sea worthy replica longship and we all gathered on the beach to witness the re-enactment 'battle'. The local school children had decorated another (sacrificial) scaled down long ship which, after being paraded through the village, was cast on to the bonfire ready for burning. Slow burning torches were then procured and we all watched the fireworks display before heading up to our campsite for the last campfire, sing song and hot chocolate of the week.

Saturday morning was a blur of activity – trailer packing and final tents struck down along with the marquee. Once again the weather was kind and it was all completed in the dry. We even managed to get in a spot of archery prior to final flag down and the journey home. The trip home always seems shorter and we were soon back in Strathaven. With everybody mucking in to empty the trailer and stow the gear, we were soon saying our farewells and excitedly passing on our tales of adventure to those who picked us up. I'm sure all they were interested in at that moment was "How soon can I get them in the shower?"

Well, had I enjoyed myself as a parent helper and would I do it again? Yes and yes again, it was a thoroughly well planned and executed Scout Camp, Stuart Ferguson is to be commended for his enthusiasm and spirit, especially when you consider the impending troop leadership crisis that was unfolding.

I would like to end with one final thought – was everybody happy? You bet your life we were!!



*Neil enjoying the rapids on the gorge walk. How will he get up this one?*

# Reunion Weekend in Kentmere

Graham Naismith reports on this year's annual FOSS reunion climb in May. Graham is actively involved in Scouting again these days as Scout Leader of the 1st Wilmslow Troop

**K**een to try something different and against Iain Park's better judgement, it was decided that we should venture south for the first time in this event's history. So this year we found ourselves gathering in the picturesque hamlet of Kentmere in the Lake District National Park.

We met on a fine May evening at a pub called the Eagle and Child in a village called Staveley situated a few miles before Windermere. The beauty of this place is just that ... it's a few miles before Windermere! This meant that my son Dougie and I were there in an hour's drive from home and some of the other English based participants enjoyed a rather shorter journey than usual. But of course that meant that the main contingent from Strathaven had to head in a different direction and brave the traffic on the M6.

After a lovely meal and the usual round of meeting, greeting and catching up with the previous year's developments we headed to our billet for the weekend which was the tiny hamlet of Kentmere. Or more precisely Maggs Howe, where the combination of a camping barn and bed and breakfast accommodation were made available for our exclusive use.

This year's team comprised Iain Park, David Court, Ian Gow, Ron Prosser, Graham and Dougie Naismith, Bibby and John Miller, John Schofield, Graeme Stuart, Robert Manby, David Russell and Rachael Trimble. It is perhaps interesting to note the places travelled from included Newport, Wilmslow, Chelmsford, Hull, Milnathorpe, Carlisle and Dumfries as well as Strathaven.

The B&B was (apparently) very comfortable and those slightly longer in years settled in to their rooms in the farmhouse after a few nightcaps, while the younger ones tried to make themselves comfortable in the barn. This was not quite so easy as it was heated by only two gas burners and had high ceilings, one small kitchen and only cold running water. If we ever return to Maggs Howe I know where I will be booking!

It was an early start on Saturday morning precipitated by the cold and the need to get our breakfast cooking, while we looked out of our window into the

conservatory of the B&B where the other members of the team were being served their full cooked breakfasts!

Lunch made and bags packed, we split into groups. The less adventurous opted for a low level stroll up the valley to the reservoir at the top, while the slightly (but not much) fitter took on the Kentmere Horseshoe. The rock-climbing trio of Robert, Rachel and David went off to seek out some nearby crags and later joined up with the high level party.

The spectacular Kentmere Horseshoe is a ridge walk taking in the peaks of Thornthwaite Crag, Bleathwaite Crag, High Street and Kentmere Pike. The highest point is at 828m but with several undulations on the way the total height

fabulous array of food and we ate our fill while telling stories and catching up with old times.

Unbeknown to Iain, Bibby had made a beautiful cake emblazoned with a silver wolf motif and, after some persuasion, Iain rose to regale us of some of his fonder memories of Scouting in Strathaven through the years and to thank everyone for their commitment to Strathaven scouting. Yet more alcohol was consumed and we eventually got to bed happy and weary after a great day.

For most the new day brought a quick breakfast and then a return to reality, although a few did a second walk before heading back home. All agreed that the change of scenery was a huge success



*Graham & Dougie Naismith enjoying the high level ridge walk of the Kentmere Horseshoe.*

climbed during the 6 hours outing was about 1100 meters (4000 ft). The route turned out to be some 12 miles long so it was a big day out for all of us.

The weather was clear and dry and those of us who braved the day in shorts, gained their first tan (sunburn) of the year. The view across the Lake District was stunning and round the whole ridge we could see the route both before and behind us.

Once back at the B&B we broke open a few beers and sat in the garden enjoying the evening sun while everyone got cleaned up and changed for dinner.

Dinner was a marvelous affair, with all of us gathered together in the B&B after a few celebratory glasses of bubbly in the conservatory, where we looked with awe upon Iain's newly awarded Silver Wolf. The lady of the house prepared a

and that the Lake District really does have some great walks and beautiful scenery. However, something tells me that next year we will be travelling north of the boarder once again.

My thanks to Iain for yet again motivating us to get together and for making all the arrangements. This tradition is always a highlight of my year and the group slowly grows each year as FOSS members realise that this event really is for all ages and abilities. My 12 year old is now firm friends with Ron Prosser, some 60 years his senior. Although some of us never see each other from one year to the next, when the FOSS reunion weekend comes around we gather from all parts of the country and it's as if we had never been apart.

Next years event will be Mid May as usual, so please get the date in your diary.

# More Adventure for FOSSAS

Matthew McVeigh rounds up a busy year of activities for the FOSS Adventure Section

This year has been a busy and successful one for FOSS Adventure Section. Alongside our achievement at the Budapest Marathon (report page 12) we have run three activities attended by a large number of younger FOSS members.

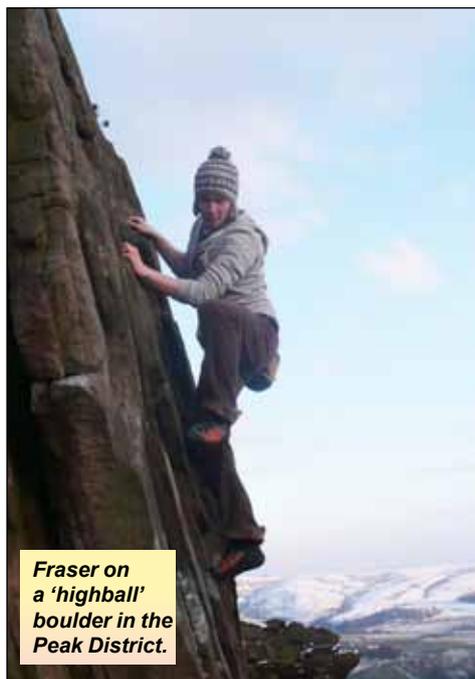
Activities kicked off in December 2009 with our Christmas cragging event. Originally conceived as a days climbing at Loudon Hill to shake off those post Christmas turkey blues, we had to move indoors to the Glasgow Climbing Centre as the harsh winter had arrived and brushing snow off rock climbing holds didn't sound like fun! The day was a massive success with twelve members attending who enjoyed the socialising and catching up as much as the climbing.

However, brushing snow off holds couldn't be avoided forever and six members braved the cold to travel to the Peak District for a long weekend in February. Mike Shorter had conceived this trip, assuring us that "gritstone is grippier in the cold", and so it proved.

Our first day saw us head to the magnificent crags at Stanage Edge, the first time for most of us. The weather was clear and sunny, although there was a lot of snow on the ground. Mike battled up Castle Crack followed by Neal Poad, while Fraser Inch and I both attempted it and failed in the sub zero conditions. Mike, one of our resident serious climbers, on a route many grades below his capability, described the freezing rock as one of the worst climbs of his life. So we decided that a retreat was in order and headed off for some bouldering instead.

For the uninitiated, bouldering is basically climbing up 'small' boulders. By small, I mean that they can actually be many metres in height. I find it pretty scary as you are without rope and with only a bouldering mat (think an expensive, lightweight, fold up gym crashmat) below you and friends acting as spotters.

The rest of the trip saw us bouldering at a variety of venues and all enjoying ascents within our own limits. Neal impressed on a 'highball' problem (tall and frightening) at the Roaches, Donald Inch enjoyed some wonderful climbing on a circuit at Stanton Moor early one morning in glorious sunshine, while Mike wowed us by climbing a route called Broken Wing which, graded 7a, is unbelievably difficult.



**Fraser on a 'highball' boulder in the Peak District.**

The weather finally defeated us on our last day when we had to dig and push our cars out of freshly fallen snow. All was not lost, however, as we travelled to nearby Bakewell for some astonishingly good (and astonishingly expensive) Bakewell Tart before saying our good-byes and heading home.

Summer rolled on and our next activity was soon upon us. Duncan Campbell had persuaded us to return to the valleys once more and eight of us congregated in Wales on a wet Thursday in July.

We soon split to go to crags best suited to our abilities. Most of us went to Little Tryfan and climbed low grade routes on a lovely slab. This was a particular triumph for some of us as I managed my first lead climb for over ten years, and Donald his first lead ever!

Meanwhile Mike and Duncan's destination was Bus Stop Quarry in Llanberis for some technical climbing on slate. During their ascent of Sterling Silver (E2 5c) a huge flake of slate split from the slab. To prevent anybody else being injured, Mike leverred it off and it crashed to the deck. Suitably frightened by the rock, for once, they retreated back to our hostel and an enjoyable night losing the local pub quiz was had by all.

Looking out of the window on day two all we could see was puddles, lashing rain and low cloud. After everyone finally got up, and Duncan stopped pacing around impatiently, we travelled to Llandudno for an afternoon bouldering

in the overhang forming Split Infinity Cave. The stronger managed graded routes while others among us simply enjoyed scrambling around.

The next day those of us up early decided to set off to climb leaving the sluggards in bed. After travelling to Idwal Slabs, and finding that they were practically under water, we drove to Tremadog which was dry, for now. Mike and Duncan climbed hard and impressive routes while Neal led Craig Thomson (who had finally joined us) and me up Bramble Butress, a superb three pitch V Diff which was the highlight of my trip. Then the rain returned.



**Neal belaying Craig up the final exposed pitch of Bramble Butress (V Diff).**

Day four and still it rained. "I'm never going to Wales again!", declared Mike in a huff. So we decided to head to Wilton Quarry near Bolton which might be dry.

It proved to be a great decision as the weather was pleasant and the rock was good. Duncan and Mike led many of the less experienced among the party up some difficult climbs with Fraser managing HVS and Stuart Scott battling up an E1. Stuart also managed his first lead and was definitely the star of the day. Again, we were all too soon heading home.

Who knows what the next year will bring for FOSSAS? Certainly more climbing and, I personally hope, a mix of activities that will encourage yet more to join us on our activities. As ever, find us on Facebook and watch out for activity announcements, or contact me (matt.mcv@virgin.net).

# 42.0038784 kilometres

Duncan Campbell provides a superb report on the FOSSAS attempt at the Budapest Marathon.



Success! Duncan Campbell, Chris Baird (centre left) and Matt McVeigh complete the 25th Budapest International Marathon.

It's another drab FOSSAS weekend, this time in the Lake District, September 2009. The group are sat around chatting, and talk turns to endurance feats – fell running up and down Skiddaw, the Round Stra'ven 50, running a marathon. "Only the mentally ill run marathons", someone claims, most likely Craig Thomson. "Dan has done one", replies his brother Matt McVeigh. So, easy then?

Several of us agree that we'd love to run a marathon but it's just such a silly prospect. Then, in my over enthusiastic manner, I figure why not! My argument centres on statements like "Let's just suck it up and get on with it", and I manage to persuade Matt, Chris Baird and Iain Masterman that it's a good idea. Dan also soon signs up to join us.

It is worth noting that the aforementioned scene took place in the wee hours after take away curry, several bottles of Newcastle Brown Ale, and under the influence of partial asphyxiation from a poorly ventilated wood burning stove. I didn't expect our decision to run a marathon to go any further. However, training began when plans were made for the Coniston 14 half marathon in March and a full marathon in September.

The Coniston 14 is a race around Lake Coniston in the Lake District. At 14 miles it is slightly over half marathon distance which is 13.1 miles. However,

due to flooding, the course had to be extended to 16.7 miles; we were devastated. Nonetheless Matt and I, plus the Inch brothers Fraser and Donald, ran and completed the race with support from Mama and Papa Inch. Halfway there!

The Inches, who had no intention of running the marathon, returned home, hung up their running shoes and retired. Matt, faced with the realisation that this was all beginning to get serious signed up to several more half marathons including the Humber half which, due to extreme temperatures, nearly took his life. I picked up my first running injury during the Coniston 14 and was plagued with many more over the next 6 months. Sadly during these 6 months Iain and Dan also got injured and had to pull out.

So in late September 2010 my girlfriend and I met Matt, Chris and Craig (who was not running) in a hostel common room in Budapest. The next day we were to attempt our first, and probably last, marathon – the 25th Budapest International Marathon. We decided that we may as well go somewhere fairly grand seeing as it was destined to be a one off. Budapest had the cheapest flights.

I can't speak for the others but I was mega nervous and meeting up after months of lone training did nothing to calm these nerves. I had read too much,

I was too prepared, and as a result was really worried. Matt had run his training half marathons (3 in total) and virtually nothing else since the Coniston 14. Chris had run no more than 10 km in one go ever (although Chris is well respected as one of the hardcore elite in FOSSAS).

In some ways my friends' lack of preparation calmed my nerves but in other ways it was the total opposite; they might finish when I couldn't, leaving me open to a lifetime of ridicule. It was to be a sleepless night.

Matt had similar worries. He had told everyone of his marathon plan, even setting up sponsorship, possibly in some attempt to prevent him excusing himself from it. Couple this with his lack of speed and the knowledge of a bus following the race to scoop up the stragglers destined not to make the 5hr 30min time limit and you can imagine his concerns. I had an image of him shambling along inches ahead of the bus bumper for the whole 26.2 miles.

The next day we set off with nervous anticipation. Matt started slow and steady and Chris shot off ahead. With Matt as the tortoise and Chris as the hare, I'm not quite sure what that made me. Surrounded by thousands of other runners was very strange, particularly since we were all out to hurt ourselves. Would thousands congregate to participate

in a mass tooth extraction? I think not. The masochistic pleasure was, however, something to behold.

The weather started off poor and got poorer. It rained like it does in Glasgow and was pretty chilly in a vest and short shorts. We all hit our individual walls pretty soon and at different heights. I hit the wall at knee height, Chris hit just below his ribs and Matt scraped along the sharp apex at precisely nipple height. I got another knee injury, Chris got a massive stitch and Matt suffered from the dreaded 'runners nipple' - plural.

The race was long, hard, and, at the time, not much fun. The approach to the finish and the finish itself were quite incredible. Towards the end I couldn't stop running, I couldn't slow down, I couldn't speed up, I could barely control my emotions or breathe properly. I wasn't breathing as I crossed the line and was in tears not long after. I think Chris and Matt were a lot manlier about the whole experience!

Initially, I thought I would look forward to being able to say, "I've run a marathon", but I don't have to say this aloud to glean pleasure from the statement. It was really hard and is a massive achievement. The satisfaction of completing a marathon is immense, made all the sweeter by our success as a group. It's safe to say none of us would have done it without the others, and that is pretty cool.

We celebrated with good beer and microwave pizzas. The next few days were spent in different levels of disability and I was miffed my physio colleague had denied me the loan of a walking stick. However we were all able to relax and enjoy the afterglow of our success - I had finished in 4:04:17, Chris in 4:52:01 and Matt in 5:05:46, raising £576 for the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland.



**Duncan Campbell going for it in Budapest.**

# RS50 2010 Report

Graeme Small reports on this year's RS50 which had record numbers.



The weather genie was kind yet again for the Round Strathven 50 charity cycle event on Sunday 24 August, now in its ninth year and bigger than ever. It was fine and dry throughout, with a variable wind to push the riders round both of the testing courses on offer.

A total of 175 riders took part in the 50 mile ride and no fewer than 53 family teams, involving a total of 161 people, for the 15 miles. When the RS50/15 was first established in 2002 just 53 hardy souls rode off into the early autumn mist. This year more than six times that number took part including 83 children aged 11 or under.

As ever the RS50 throws up some remarkable stories. This year Philip Levy came all the way from Northampton to record one of the best-ever times for the 50 mile circuit. At just over 2 hours and 30 minutes this is at an average speed of 20 mph, very impressive when you take into account the grinding ascents of Millsheugh and Ardochrigg which few save the hardened racer can complete at speeds approaching double figures.

One of last year's heroes, Strathven Scout Kyle Dixon, built on his record as the joint youngest rider by completing the course in under 5 hours. Kyle was ten last year when he completed the 50 mile ride, but that achievement was challenged this year by five year old Aime Hunter, who completed the 15 miles route entirely unaided. A very high benchmark has been set for all future participants to live up to.

This year the mass start in the George Alan Park at Strathven was launched by the local MSP Andy Kerr. There were

many regulars among the hordes of cyclists supporting the event, but also lots of new faces from far and wide, including riders from Aberdeen, Freuchie in Fife, Moniaive in Dumfries and a large family group of fourteen from Edinburgh taking part in the 15-mile event.

A number of families have now taken part in every single one of the nine editions of the RS50. In that time some of their children, such as Sam Park, another Strathven Scout, have progressed from being towed round by their parents in 2002 to completing the 50 miles route under their own steam this year, a real achievement.

The organising committee from Friends of Strathven Scouts are grateful to all those who assisted in many ways throughout the day, including members of the Strathven Rotary Club and the Round Table, as well as the regular individual supporters who assisted with marshalling and safety controls.

As ever, home-baking and drinks were provided at various points throughout the route and at the finish in the park, confirming the RS50's reputation as the best fed charity ride in Scotland. Last but not least, the ladies of the Strathven Scout Executive did a marvellous job recording the entries and checking in the returning cyclists.

The monies raised by this sponsored event reached just over £4,200, half of which was donated to the charity Health Help International and the other half to the both the Scouts and Guides in Strathven. Join the ride next year for a personal challenge and to see if we can push the decade's total amount raised to over £40,000.

# An Experience With HHI in India

Iain Park gives an insightful report on his eight day visit to Kerala and Tamil Nadu in February.

As readers may recall, all of the proceeds of our 2008 RS50 were donated to Ron Prosser's charity, Health Help International, to help build the Asha Kiran Ashram Children's Home in Tamil Nadu in India. This amazingly represented nearly 70% of the total building costs of the Home (pictured) which caters for over 30 mentally and physically handicapped children.

I had the privilege of going to India early this year with two of the Trustees of HHI to see some of the fantastic work which the charity is doing in southern India. It is led by their man on the ground, Australian born Tom Sutherland, the nearest to a saint that I'm likely to meet.

This was an amazing experience for me which I hope to repeat sometime. The highlight of my eight days touring the various orphanages, old folks homes and hospitals as well as the homes of individuals who have been helped by

HHI were the two days spent at the Tamil Nadu Home.

To see the work being done there by Pastor Santhos and his dedicated team of helpers for the children, ranging in age from 2 to 14, all with fairly serious degrees of disability, was very humbling. However, it was great to see how the monies raised at the RS50 have been put to such great effect.

It is the way in which all of the monies raised by HHI, directed to both Zambia and India, go directly to the poor, needy and sick people, both young and old, giving immediate and desperately needed benefit to them, that makes this charity so worth while supporting.

As you will read elsewhere in the newsletter plans are afoot for a return visit by the Strathaven Explorers next year to Zambia to do further work on behalf of HHI.

Our time in India involved a non-stop whirlwind tour from early morning 'til

late at night of the many projects supported by HHI. These are organized by Tom Sutherland and his Indian colleague Philip Mathew, and include five orphanages and children's homes, three care homes for old folks or for destitute and mentally handicapped adults, three hospitals and a number of visits to people at home.

One of the most depressing of all of these was the Shanti Mandiram home which houses over 90 destitute and, in many cases, mentally handicapped old folk. The scene (pictured) inside the home is what I imagine Bedlam might have looked like. This place desperately requires to be extended and improved and 50% (£2,200) of the monies raised from this year's RS50 have been donated to HHI to help with this.

Please look at HHI's website ([www.hhi.org.uk](http://www.hhi.org.uk)) to read more of the great work which HHI does in India and Zambia and support the charity if you can.



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Asha Kiran Ashram Children's Home in Tamil Nadu; Tuition of local children; Children singing; Inside Shanti Madiram Home for the destitute and mentally handicapped elderly.

# Iain Park Awarded Silver Wolf

2010 marks the 65th anniversary of Iain's investiture as a Cub and this year he was awarded a Silver Wolf. Matthew McVeigh's profile reveals Iain's extraordinary service to Strathaven Scouting.

Go to the Scout Association website and you will find the following; "The Silver Wolf is the unrestricted gift of the Chief Scout and is only awarded for service of a most exceptional nature". Anybody who has known, worked with or been lead by Iain during his involvement with Strathaven Scout Group must surely agree that he fits the bill.

Iain joined the Group as a Cub in 1945 and progressed through the 2nd Strathaven Scouts and Rovers, earning his King's Scout Award. He became Assistant Scout Master in the 1950s before taking on the troop himself and was instrumental in bringing the 1st and 2nd Strathaven troops together in 1956.

Adventurous activities, particularly in the mountains, for which Iain is perhaps best known, began in 1958 with a trip into the Cairngorms where boys and leaders spent the night sleeping under the Shelter Stone above Loch Avon. Many FOSS members not born at the time will have memories of the long walk into this remote area with Iain to celebrate anniversaries of the event.

In 1959 Iain led the first of many international expeditions to Kandersteg Scout Camp in Switzerland before leaving Strathaven in 1960 to enter National Service. Of course National Service couldn't keep Iain from Scouting and he became Assistant Scout Master for the British Scouts in Western Europe troop in Dusseldorf during his posting.

By 1963 Iain had returned to Scotland and became Group Scout Master, the equivalent of today's Group Scout Leader, running the Group until 1970. During this period Iain ran the 1967 expedition to Wiltz in Luxembourg with 11 Ventures and 28 Scouts. The Scouts travelled on to a camp in Monchau, Germany while the Ventures went hiking, before they regrouped for home hospitality. Iain still regards this expedition as one of his finest Scouting experiences.

Throughout the 1960s Iain also instigated and ran 'adventure camps' to the most remote parts of the Highlands. Typical venues included the island of Rum and the isolated peninsula of Moidart. These wild places offered unparalleled experiences for the boys attending, many of whom are now FOSS members.

In 1966 Iain was involved in the formation of the Senior Scouts Section. This preceded the official launch of Venture Scouting in 1967 and was quite revolutionary.

In 1970 Iain's job took him to London and, although his active involvement with the Group ceased, he stayed in touch, principally through Jim Murdoch. By 1977 he had returned to Scotland and became Venture Scout Leader, a role that he retained for seven years.

When he left in 1984 to return to London Iain really thought his time in Scouting was finished. As ever it wasn't. He was drawn back into involvement in 1990 when Jim proposed a Scout and Venture trip to Philmont Scout Ranch in the USA. I was among the eleven participants Iain put through a rigorous series of training activities before the trip itself, which involved a ten day hike in the arid scrub of New Mexico. From a personal perspective the expedition is without any doubt what kept me in Scouting at the time, and Iain's training introduced me to the joys of climbing and the Scottish mountains which I retain to this day.

Having returned to the fold again, Iain became Venture Scout Leader until around 1996. At this stage he left to take an appointment as the Mountain Advisor to Lanarkshire Scout Area. Iain relished the role, having previously criticised the way in which mountain authorisations and other issues were being dealt with. Iain not only gained his own Summer Mountain Leader Certificate and became a Mountain Assessor, but instigated training and assessment days for leaders to encourage Groups across the Area to run exciting and challenging mountain activities for youth members.

Back at Group level Iain became Assistant Explorer Scout Leader in 2006, a role which he retains to this day. During this time he led the Explorer Scout expedition to Monze in Zambia to support the charity Health Help International run by FOSS member Ron Prosser.

Any profile of Iain would be incomplete without mentioning FOSS.



Iain (right) as APL of the Stag Patrol at Gilwell Park in 1951.

Originally conceived by him along with Executive Committee members Kath Russell and Robin Dyer, FOSS was formed in 1995 as a means of raising funds for the Group and encouraging former members to retain an interest in its activities. Moreover, it allowed Scouts of the past to meet up at the annual reunion weekends. The social side of FOSS has most definitely been one of its major successes.

Iain, with the FOSS Committee, also conceived the running of the RS50 as a cycling event in 2002. Being involved with FOSS at the time I can vividly recall that it was Iain who drove the project forward relentlessly and he has worked tirelessly, now with truly expert support, to make the event the success it is.

So, 'service of a most exceptional nature'. Looking back over Iain's Scouting career how could anybody argue that he has given anything but the most unbelievable service to Strathaven Scout Group and the community more broadly?

Ask Iain what he regards as being the highlight of his involvement and he talks fondly of the 1967 expedition to Germany, and still thinks that the Philmont trip in 1991 was one of the best expeditions ever. However, Zambia has to come first, working to support HHI on the ground with, as Iain describes them, "a tremendous team of leaders and Explorers".

What always amazes me about Iain is the way that he inspires young people. He thus helps to create the "tremendous leaders" with whom he shared the Zambia expedition. The wonderful leaders I had as a Scout had experienced Iain's enthusiasm. My own generation of leaders, myself included, shared this experience, as have following generations. Perhaps this passing on of enthusiasm is Iain's greatest gift to Strathaven Scouts.

# News and Events Round Up

## FOSS AGM

The FOSS AGM will be held on Wednesday 1 December 2010 in the Scout and Guide Centre at 7.30 pm. The business part of the evening will be brief and we would welcome your attendance. Refreshments will be served following this when you will have the opportunity to chat to fellow members and there will be a slide presentation of the Scout and FOSS activities over the past year.

## Reunion Weekend 2011

The provisional dates for next year's FOSS Reunion Weekend are Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd May 2011. If you have not been to any of these weekends Graham Naismith's report for this year's will illustrate what you are missing.

These annual weekends provide a great opportunity for you to meet up with friends from your Scouting days. Come along for the social gathering even if you don't wish to join in the hill climb or walk on the Saturday.

Ideas for a venue are welcome. Final details/dates will be published on the Web Site and included in next year's Interim Newsletter.

## FOSS Commercials

We are pleased to report that the second edition of the RS50 Guide was published in time for this year's event and is selling well at a bargain price of £5. We printed 300 copies but require to sell about 100 to allow us to break even and repay the loan which the Scout Executive Committee kindly gave us.

Please consider buying one, even if you are not a cyclist. The booklet contains interesting information about Strathaven and the countryside through which the RS50 route passes. A great stocking filler this Christmas!

There are also still a number of copies of the Centenary DVD, well worth the £8, you could give a copy at Christmas to a present or former Scout.

## 10th Round Stra'ven 50

THE DATE FOR next year's RS50, is to be Sunday 21st August 2011. This will be the 10th such event and as you will read in Graeme Small's report on this year's event it is growing ever more successful. We want to make the 10th RS50 something special and therefore ask all FOSS members to support it in one way or another.

Keep the date free, get on your bike and help us to beat this year's record number of cyclists. More importantly you can help us to raise even more money for our selected Charity and to help the Strathaven Scouts and Guides. Alternatively volunteers to help marshal the event on the day are always needed and welcome.

Participants from this year's event who deserve a special mention are David and Jackie Fulton and Jim Dobbie, who between them raised the excellent sum of £820 through sponsorship of their efforts. Our sincere thanks are due to them and to the other nine supporters who contributed a total of £1,641 in sponsor monies and helped us to reach the very satisfying total.

## FOSS Website

The FOSS website is the place to find all of our latest news and announcements. Details of each year's Round Stra'ven 50 are available in advance. Photos of recent events will give you a flavour of the activities at both Reunion Weekends and of the Adventure Section.

The site also gives details of our membership and the fascinating history of the Group. For those of you that missed our centenary, reports and photos of the activities undertaken by both the Group and FOSS can be found.

We are grateful for the support of David Miller who acts as our webmaster and provides hosting for the site. Find us online at:

[www.friendsofstrathavenscouts.org.uk](http://www.friendsofstrathavenscouts.org.uk)

## FOSS ADVENTURE SECTION

FOSS ADVENTURE SECTION is the activity wing of FOSS aimed at encouraging younger members to join. 29 past members of the Group are signed up to the FOSSAS Facebook page.

Activities are run by our members for our members. Among us we have a number of extremely experienced hill walkers, mountaineers, rock climbers, mountain bikers and cyclists. All are willing to share their skills and experience if you want to try something new. Perhaps you can add new skills to the list!

In 2009, our first year, we enjoyed an epic Munro bagging expedition in the Cairngorms and a trip for climbing and hill walking in the Lake District.

Highlights of our year in 2010 have included a social day climbing at Glasgow Climbing Centre, climbing and bouldering in the Peak District, climbing and walking in Wales and running the Budapest marathon.

Essentially if you want to do something then suggest it or organise it. Activities range from long weekends to single days all over the UK. No (legal) adventurous activities are off limits!

Membership is open to ex-members aged 18+ and is FREE if you're under 21 and FREE until you start gainful employment. We simply ask that you then sign up as a regular FOSS member.

If you're a former Scout, Venture or Explorer and want to stay in touch, hang out with old friends and meet new ones, find us on Facebook (where you can check out photos and videos of our activities) or e-mail [matt.mcv@virgin.net](mailto:matt.mcv@virgin.net) to be kept informed of activities.

FOSS Adventure Section can be found on Facebook at:

[www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=58952642411](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=58952642411)

FOSSnews is the official newsletter of the Friends of Strathaven Scouts, who exist to support Scouting in Strathaven. It is published by them at the Strathaven Scout and Guide Centre. Copy editing and desk top publishing by Matthew McVeigh, to whom comments can be forwarded. Proof reading by former FOSSnews editor Tom Milne who provides valuable support and guidance. Printing by Bill Sturrock, Print Matters, 16 - 18 Swan Street, Brechin, DD96EF whose price represents a very generous contribution to FOSS.