

MAY 2023

# THE MIGHTY FIFTH

(a longer than usual)  
Newsletter of the 5th Saffron Walden Scout Group

## What an adventure!

April 1st 2023... 100 of the Mighty Fifths went on an international trip to Normandy, it did not quite go according to plan.. but it was quite an adventure nonetheless.

The trip included some incredible resourcefulness, planning, resilience and some amazing memories.

One of our Scout leaders has written a superb report on the highs and lows and we have published it alongside this newsletter.

So grab a cup of tea, settle down and read on... ..

Key dates:

Group Camp  
9th – 11th June

Group AGM  
Sunday 9th July

District renewal of  
promises  
10th September

## Congratulations Nigel

We are thrilled that our volunteer and all round Scouting legend, Nigel Bailey, was selected as one of only 500 official Coronation Champions!

Nigel was recognised for the multiple roles he has held in Scouting over the last 10 years, including being central to putting on amazing virtual camps for more than 200 young people in lockdown and his work behind the scenes to ensure local Scouting runs effectively, as well as his love of helping young people develop skills for life, his support of grassroots football and his ambassadorial and fundraising support of premature baby charity BLISS. Nigel received an official Coronation Champions pin badge, a signed certificate from Their Majesties, and an invite to the Windsor Castle Coronation Concert.

Congratulations Nigel, we're massively grateful for everything you do for Scouting, we hope you enjoyed your celebrations!



Windsor Castle







# Would you like to shape young people's lives for the better, and find out a whole lot more about yourself, too?

The 5th Saffron Walden Scout Group (young people age 4 to 14) are looking for a Cub Scout Leader.

Supported by your fellow adult volunteers in the section, you'll take responsibility for organising a well-rounded programme packed with plenty of skill boosting activities and adventures.

Whether you're leading an activity at your local meeting place, organising a night away, or buttering 120 slices of bread to feed a Pack of very hungry Cubs - no two meetings are the same. The difference you make, though, is always great.

Contact us today. We'd love to chat about what's good for you.

[nigel.bailey@5thsaffronwaldenscouts.org.uk](mailto:nigel.bailey@5thsaffronwaldenscouts.org.uk)

<https://5thsaffronwaldenscouts.org.uk/volunteer/>







## Squirreling about

Our super Squirrels have been out in the forest building dens, roasting marshmallows, talking about (and to) superheroes, planting sunflowers, Easter Egg hunt, navigating with maps, church parade, the story badge, a Coronation evening and cooking outside. and we have had three of our Squirrels move on up to Beavers.



Squirrel campfire



Beaver bridges

## Busy Beavers

Along with a panto, a magic show, a trip to Normandy and a whole range of activities and badge work, the Beavers have been keeping very busy. The Wednesday Weasels talked about the value of money, visited Waitrose to learn about Fairtrade goods, and built bridges that would hold Wendy Beaver. The Friday Ferrets had a visit from Masuma (Support4Sight) and an outing to Pets at Home. They also had a real "swim up" ceremony at the Lord Butler Leisure Centre. In addition both the Friday Ferrets and Wednesday Weasels went stargazing as part of the Space badge and had great fun together at the Burns Night Sleepover where they completed the Thistle Award (8 Scottish related activities). They also made Group history by going on their first international trip.

## Cubs adventures

Cubs adventures this term have included an 'Incident hike' (treating casualties they came across during a hike - amazing how many injuries they encountered!), a sight loss awareness evening, one of our sixers, Nathan, ran a fitness evening which wore everyone out and finished off his Team Leader badge. A visit from a local dentist who kept the Cubs entertained for the whole evening, and a excellent Korean evening led by one of our young leaders.

We also proudly invested 2 Cubs on the ferry back from Normandy and presented Silver Awards to Nathan and Luke from the Incas and Luke and Frankie from the Aztecs.



Cub incident hike





## Scouting life

The Scouts have been building fires, cooking bacon in the park and kayaking in a cold lake. They had a brilliant spring camp including pedal karts, vertical wall, rolling rock, archery and tunnels. Plus of course great food and a big fire! A pancake evening, painting eggs, church parade, Waitrose bag packing and made some really impressive trebuchets out of wood and rope.



Trebuchet!

## Fundraising update

The efforts and contributions that went towards our Normandy fundraising were outstanding, we would like to thank all the behind the scenes work done by the leaders, parents, committee and army of volunteers. As a charitable group we are always looking for ways to help fund equipment and skills provision. Our subs do not cover all the resources we need for a term of activities so we are always looking to raise more funds to help us teach those skills for life.

We are looking into another quiz night or maybe a bingo night, fundraising at Tesco and welcome any ideas or offers of time or resources for the group. If you can help, please let us know.

## AGM update

Our annual general meeting which will include a BBQ, axe throwing, bouncy castle, candy floss, fire pit, tug of war and much more! Will be held on 9th July 2-4pm at Clavering village hall. It is sure to be a fantastic event so please join us for lots of fun. Invites to follow.







# Are you handy with your hands?

# Help keep our equipment in order as our equipment manager

We are looking for the sort of person that enjoys tinkering about and fixing things, someone that can't help coiling a loose rope and always insists on packing away a tent the right way.

The 5th Saffron Walden Scout Group (young people age 4-14) need a positive practical person to be our Group Equipment Manager (our 'Quartermaster'), to maintain our equipment and look after our stores. You'll join a friendly team committed to helping change the lives of young people.

No specific time commitment is required, and the role is flexible enough to fit around you.

To find out more about the role, drop us a note to  
[nigel.bailey@5thsaffronwaldenscouts.org.uk](mailto:nigel.bailey@5thsaffronwaldenscouts.org.uk)

[https://5thsaffronwaldenscouts.org.uk/volunteer/  
#SkillsForLife](https://5thsaffronwaldenscouts.org.uk/volunteer/#SkillsForLife)







## Boosting our fundraising by 25%

Did you know that there is something you can do right now to help boost our fundraising efforts... Gift Aid allows us to claim back the basic rate tax already paid on donations by the donor. All you need to do is fill out **one simple form** and we do all the rest. This means we can claim back from the government on your behalf 25p for every £1 donated, boosting the value of your donations by a quarter. Our Gift Aid donations have fallen dramatically over the past few years, and it really is as simple as asking you to fill out a form once.

You can get a form from your section leader or sign up on OSM.

## Land needed

We really need a good piece of land we can use in which we can teach bushcraft skills and sleepovers - do you know of anywhere we could use either short or long term?

If you have any suggestions, please email [gsl@5thsaffronwaldenscouts.org.uk](mailto:gsl@5thsaffronwaldenscouts.org.uk)

## Group T-Shirts



Our unique group t-shirts are available to purchase directly from our local supplier Saffron Apparel. Worn under the Cub and Beaver Jumpers and as an optional hot summer day alternative to uniform. (Badges still sewn to the official uniform).

Free delivery 'deliver to school' means deliver to one of our volunteers who will ensure it gets to your section meeting. The shirts are £10 for a child size and £12 for Adults. A small donation to each purchase goes directly to the 5th Saffron Walden Scout Group to support those less able to afford Scouting.

You can purchase the T-shirt directly from [Saffron Apparel](#)



## Leaders & Awards

Exciting news with some new awards and new volunteer leaders:

Bernice (Akela to our Aztec Cubs) received her wood badge for completing training as Young Leader Leader.

Nicky (Baloo to our Aztec Cubs) received a Chief Scouts Commendation for Good Service.

Two of our Young Leaders, Yas & Rob, were awarded Commissioner's Commendations for their exemplary work ethic and role modelling during the Normandy trip.

We have also invested three new volunteer leaders in Liz Furse (Beavers) & Matthew Shanahan & Charlie Stalker (Scouts).

Also Lauren Boardman (Squirrels) has taken on a more responsible role as Assistant Squirrel Leader

We welcome two new volunteer executive committee members: Ed Byrne as our new treasurer. Ed is dad to Henry (Beavers), Annabelle (Cubs) and Lily (Scouts), so has a good deal of experience in the 5ths and we know will be a great benefit to the Group. Also Wei Jia has joined the committee, Wei is mum to Zixchuan (Scouts) - welcome aboard.



## Thank You Jon

A huge thank you to Jon Moore who has 'retired' from our group committee treasurer role after 7 years of volunteer service!

Thank you for all the tireless work in sorting the spreadsheets, gift aid, annual reports, fundraising numbers and balancing the books. Tremendously well done. Thank you!

Latest information, photos and stories can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/5thSaffronWalden>



More badges to sew on?

Here is the link to where to put them:

<https://www.scouts.org.uk/information-for-parents/scout-badges>



## One more award - For Ken Lowe

Written by Nigel Bailey

The Chief Scouts Commendation for Meritorious Conduct is awarded for conduct of a high standard for example through dedication to Scouts despite difficulties someone has endured. Ken is a scouter through and through. He is our most experienced Scout leader, Assistant Group Scout Leader and Acting District Scout Leader. He is determined to teach traditional scout skills and support those who most need scouting. He holds the view that scouting genuinely provides skills for life, both practical and also those skills that bring us through difficult times. He shows a compassion for the more needy and those for whom scouting genuinely changes their lives.

Ken goes much further than most in not only keeping Scouts going to its usual high standard but pushing for more and for bigger, better, more adventurous and rewarding activities for both his Scout troop and the group as a whole.

All of that is amazing in itself. But it is even more so when you consider that Ken, Grace and Archie sadly lost someone incredibly precious to them in 2021. Becky is missed by everyone who knew her and it is even more remarkable that everything Ken has done for scouting continued throughout the 5 years of Becky's illness and despite this massive loss. Perhaps most incredibly, Ken planned Christmas camp for 2021 through the last days of Becky's illness and ensured it was able to go ahead without him when Becky died 2 days before camp.

Becky would be more proud than anyone that Ken has been awarded the Chief Scouts Commendation for Meritorious Conduct







## Normandy 1st - 4th April 2023

Our 4 day international trip top Normandy, 100 young people from the 5th Saffron Walden Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, Young Leaders and adult Leaders. Travelling in 2 coaches from Saffron Walden to a chateau in Normandy. Visiting the D-Day landing Omaha beach, a German gun battery at Longues-sur-Mer and laying wreaths at the British Normandy Memorial at Ver-sur-Mer. Also spending time at the largest WWII cemetery in France at Bayeux and visiting the medieval town. Trying local food, Meeting local French scout Leaders. Building skills for life and making memories to last a lifetime.

### Trip Report - from Eryl Stafford (volunteer Scout Leader)

On the morning of Saturday 1st April on a drizzly grey morning, Swan Meadow Car park...

The clear message was meet at 7am, to leave at 7:30am, or you miss the bus. Well, the Scouts and leaders all made it, but the buses were a little late. The normal efficient 5th's organisation ensured everyone was checked in and allocated to the right bus. Two buses, 50 people on each, gold bus (named after the beach in Normandy) orange bus (because it is Dom's favourite colour).

The orange bus was first to leave just after 8am and the gold bus left 20 minutes later from waving parents all desperate to get away for their weekend of freedom. I think we made it as far as Great Chesterford before I was asked by the first person if they could start to eat their sweets (and that was Leader Steve).



The joys of modern technology meant the buses were tracking each other so we could see our progress towards Dover. Constant tracking of the online news meant we had an idea we may face a small delay at Dover. Who knew there were 3 routes into the port, we do now! The orange bus took one route to the port and was sitting in traffic as gold bus closed in. Gold bus's sat nav said go right at the roundabout onto route 2 into the Port. That plan worked right up to the point the police were standing in the road diverting us to route 3, which turned out to be a 20 mile diversion. The powers of google maps however had us making a detour through a couple of villages and heading back towards Folkestone and then onto Dover ..... err no, as the A20 was now closed for Operation Stack.





A bit of neat driving accompanied by a scout leader stopping traffic had the gold bus on the move again through the backstreets of Folkstone and onto the back road to Dover. The two bus dots on the map were once again converging. Orange bus made it to the front of the ferry queue to check in at 11.15. However, they gave over their details and phone number and were then directed back down the A20 to the first Services on the M20 where they were told to wait to be called to the port.



The buses got to wave at each other as gold bus was sitting in traffic waiting to get to the port as orange bus headed for the services. The queue was moving so slowly I had time to get off, walk to the nearest Costa, order 15 different coffees and walk back to the bus some 100m from where I had left it!

The same fate awaited gold bus as we arrived at the port. Details were taken and we were sent to the services. I think it was at this point the size of the problem we were facing started to reveal itself. That journey back to the services was 15 miles and on the other side of the road it was filled with trucks and busses parked up heading to the port. On arrival at the services, we met up with orange bus and 40 other coaches all parked up waiting for the call to be called back to port again.

On entering the services there were people all over the floor! The content of all those coaches in the car park were all in the service station, occupying most of the floor space. Clearly some of them had been there a long time, well since Friday night to be accurate. The sad thing was that the average age in the service station must have been in the late teens. The groups camped around the floor were school and university ski trips, sports teams, societies, and the likes all heading off for fixtures, competitions, tours, and holidays.



Somehow, we managed to find space in an abandoned ex coffee shop to act as a base. The various members of the Mighty 5th occupied their time playing games outside (some organised and some not), touring the fantastic facilities of an English service station, or just sitting down and chatting with friends or playing the various card games and the like. If their lunch had not been eaten by the time we got off the M11 they dived into it now.





Time passed, various meetings were held to decide next steps and carry out dynamic risk reviews. Meanwhile an impromptu Zumba class, held in the car park for the scouts by a member of the public also stuck at the service station was a hit with the young people.



As teatime approached, we decided that feeding the 5ths was a priority but which of the Michelin starred restaurants on site should we use? The choice of Burger King, Chop Stix, Taco Bell or KFC killed an hour for queuing and deciding which one they wanted. Back to our abandoned coffee shop with the successful fruits of the hunt, a feast took place. Using the other facilities was a bit hit and miss, as due to the volume of people in the building they were shut every now and again for blockages.

Given the time some of the many coach groups had spent in those services with limited facilities and even less information and no sign of authority anywhere, the general atmosphere was good humoured and civil. A credit to all the clubs, schools and societies involved. Of course, the Mighty 5th were by far the best, and this was mentioned to various leaders by other group leaders throughout our enforced stay.



But by 8pm, still with no sign of any movement, the prospect of a night in the service station loomed. This was felt to be outside of the safeguarding standards we uphold. All our leaders had been operating now for 12 hours, the area was not secure. The decision was made to reboard the buses and make a run for the Port. If we made it onto a boat, then we would continue but if not we would head for home. We headed to the loos and then the buses...



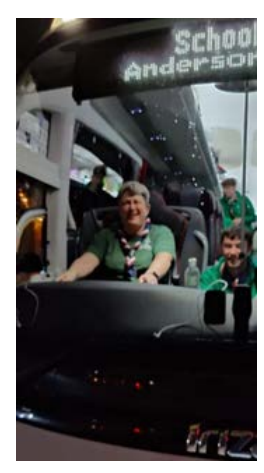


While boarding the buses we saw someone in the coach park with a Hi-Viz jacket on. On questioning, it turned out he was from DFDS and had the list of buses to release towards the port. We told him of our plan, and he informed us, that unless he sent us we would be turned away. He was releasing buses in the order they had checked in and about 6 at a time. The paper list he had was now a bit soggy with the rain and didn't seem to be in any order. We managed to get our buses grouped together as one instead of an hour apart and worked out that we were about 4 from the front. By now it was about 9.15pm and it looked like we could be released by 10pm and on a ferry by midnight!

Just when you think your problems are solved another one comes along. This time it was in the form of the drivers' hours. The gold bus driver was running out of driver time but if we could stay stationary until 10.30pm we would be OK for the next day. Of course, at 10.10pm we got the instruction to move. So lots of counting of heads and coming up with excuses to the man in Hi-Viz as to why we had not set off yet. By 10.25 I think we had tried his patience enough and orange bus moved before he revoked our permission. A bit more acting and taking a bin bag to the skip saying we had been dealing with a 'sick' child and we were firing up the engine dead on 10.30, tacho reset and off to the port.



The leaders WhatsApp and tracking kicked into action with the expectations of being on a ferry by midnight. What was amazing, was all those lorries that were parked up on the M20 and A20 at 11am had all gone. We sailed into the port (the only sailing we would be doing for a while as it turned out). We were checked in and put into a queue only a few hundred metres from ticket check and passport control.



After about 15 mins of going nowhere, I got off to see how far behind the orange bus was to our gold bus. It turned out that there was just one bus between us, so all good. However, Nigel, Steve, John, and I thought we would see how big the queue was and took a wander to the front. 26 coaches later we hit the front of the queue! On our walk back we stopped and chatted to the people on the 7th coach from the front, who informed us that they had been there since 2pm and had been informed they would be on a 2am ferry.





Our issue however was that we were now stuck. We were in a lane with barriers we could not get out of. We had a coach load of kids and on gold coach a non-functioning toilet! We returned to our buses and informed everyone that we were going to be here for some time and turned the lights off so people could get some sleep.

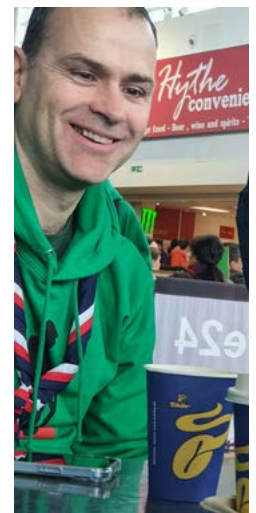


I wandered off to see if there were any facilities and it turned out there was a small toilet and a Costa Coffee stand. Given that it was almost midnight I asked what time they were open until, and they said usually 8pm but the staff had just decided to stay there and stay open as there was nothing else there and they felt sorry for all the stuck travellers.



I got chatting to one group of girls who said that they had been there since Friday (it was now Sunday). They had queued on Friday and made it to passport control. They were made to get off the bus a few at a time and go to passport control and then back on the bus. Just as the last ones were clearing passport control and were about to get on the bus, all set to move, the bus door fell off! They then had to pull to one side and were waiting for a mechanic to come and repair the door. They would have to do the whole passport thing again! So overall, I think we were doing OK.

At 2am as predicted by bus number 7 the queue started to move. We should have stayed put because as the driver started the bus up, all the interior lights came on and woke everyone as we moved a few coach lengths and then stopped. This then happened on and off for the next 6 hours. By 8.30am, 24 hours after we had left Saffron Walden we were at the front of the queue. Customs and passport control cleared. We all had to get off and show our passports and have them stamped and then get back on the bus. The orange bus was last on the 9.10am ferry and gold bus was first on the 10.40 ferry.







Once on the ferry, a full breakfast was had by most, and most managed to not see it again. We were back on the bus and off through France towards Normandy and our chateau. Apart from a stop at a French motorway service (no one lying on floors was a bonus and the crepes with sugar went down well) it was plain sailing. Getting a big bus down the final small French lanes to the chateau was interesting but after a few detours we made it. We were just in time for tea at 8pm - 36 hours after leaving Saffron Walden. We managed to have a campfire and meet some local French Scout leaders before having an early night so our real adventure could begin after some proper sleep.



Monday was a packed day as Dom and the team had moved things around to make the most of the time left. After breakfast and sandwich making for lunch, it was all back on the buses and off to Bayeux. We visited the largest British D-Day landing cemetery with over 4,000 immaculately kept graves. The scouts went off to discover and plant small memorial flags. Each graveyard has a memorial book with an alphabetical list of all those buried there and their location. We managed to look up scouts' surnames and identify a grave of someone with the same name, and as it turned out not many years older than them, so they could find them and plant their flag. After a group gathering and the saying of the Scout Promise in French, a scarf was laid in remembrance. Back on the bus we went into Bayeux and had time to look around and if you wanted, to visit and see the famous tapestry.



Our next stop was a German Gun emplacement on the cliffs overlooking Gold Beach, with a lunch stop for the sandwiches. It was amazing to see how big the guns were and how far back they were set from the cliffs.





Back on the coaches we arrived at Omaha Beach. There is a memorial on the prom and a new sculpture on the sand. The beach is vast with no cover, no rocks, no dunes just empty open spaces. Given the open ground, it is amazing that the graveyards are not bigger. However, it is a fantastic beach and the scouts spent time playing boules, messing around in the water, and generally letting off steam.

Back on the bus we arrived at the relatively new, D-Day Commonwealth Memorial site. We were lucky enough to meet someone from the Commonwealth Memorial Society who gave us all an impromptu introduction to the site and how best to view it. It is an amazing place that tracks the history of the Normandy landings day by day with the names of everyone lost each day from every service. We learnt that there are two women and one VC on the memorial stones.



We laid a Poppy wreath and a memorial scarf at the main memorial stone. It was also the perfect location to recognise Ken Lowe and the achievement of his Meritorious Conduct Award. Dom presented Ken his well-deserved award.







Back at the Chateau, another great meal was served including a course of snails and frogs' legs. After a bit of down time the scouts were off to bed while the leaders 'relaxed'. A plan had been hatched by the tour operator to switch the ferry port to a closer one giving us the morning to catch up on things we missed on Sunday. The downside would be the ferry crossing was longer and to Portsmouth, meaning the drive back would be longer. On balance we thought it was a good idea and went to bed with plans to visit the sites we missed.



Tuesday morning was spent at the Chateau playing minigolf and football while we sorted out issues with the drivers. Once again, we had hit the issue with the drivers' hours tacho. Our changed plans meant that the drivers could not start moving until 1pm if they were to get us home to Saffron Walden via the longer route. This meant we were stuck at the Chateau, so couldn't go to see the planned sites. The conclusion was, whilst the chateau was great it wasn't worth the extra hours of travel. Hasty phone calls were made, and we were back on the way to Calais. A rush of activity saw us on the buses and dashing through the French countryside.



A quick stop for fuel and we made the ferry, no queues, no waiting. Painless. On board for a meal and then everyone on deck for some investitures and awards for scouts and leaders.







This is of course one version of events. I can guarantee your Beaver/Cub/Scout has their own version of the adventure. To them the M20 services and a Taco bell might be the highlight of the weekend. I hope not, I hope that something they saw in one of the many Normandy sites inspires them to find out more or brings home some of the history they learn in the classroom. Maybe they won't be asking for snails or frog's legs for tea anytime soon, but they had the opportunity to try them.



Lastly, I want to thank the entire team that organised this trip, raised the money, filled in the mountain of forms and generally made this happen. After all the effort that had been put in, we had to see it past the M20 services and through to the end. Oh, and one more last thing, thank you to all those that donated to the curry and drinks fund. It's not why any of us do it but it was greatly appreciated, thank you.

Thanks,  
Eryl

