

2 YEARS ON...

# WHAT'S THE STORY NOW?

The new Section has progressed in leaps and bounds – but much still remains to be done, reports **Graham Haddock**, National Commissioner for Explorer Scouting

EXPLORER SCOUTS



It's been two years since Explorer Scouting was launched and more than two and a half years since the famous Manchester workshop where the outline details of the two new Sections were announced. It's time to reflect on how are things going with Explorer Scouting.

"It's been a hard year," said one tired Explorer Scout Leader attending one of the Communications and Consultation meetings last autumn. He's not wrong! It has been a tough year for everyone concerned with the establishment of our new Section.

It has also been an amazingly successful year! Explorer Scouting has taken the UK by storm, and it's all down to the many dedicated District Explorer Scout Commissioners (in particular), ESLs, District Commissioners and Assistant County/Area Commissioners, who have put a tremendous amount of time and effort into getting our new Section established.

#### THANK YOU!

Some Districts have made it to the end of a long and tortuous road and now have a vibrant Explorer Scout Section. Some are still wrestling with the practicalities of establishing the new Section. Wherever you are in the process, I would like to thank you, on behalf of Headquarters and the many Explorer Scouts across the country who are now enjoying an exciting and active Section.

Can I also acknowledge the sense of enthusiasm and energy that seems to

have been a feature of Explorer Scouting since its launch? This can only bode well for the future. I have had personal experience of this positive energy at the many Explorer Scout events and meetings that I have been able to attend in the past year.

#### HERE TO STAY

Explorer Scouting is clearly here to stay. While we await this year's census figures, it is clear from 'anecdotal evidence' that Explorer Scouting is flourishing across the country. Some may say I am looking at things with rose-tinted spectacles in making such bold statements, but I don't think I am. I have made many visits in the past year to AGMs, Explorer Scout events and various meetings where I am getting a consistent message... Explorer Scouting is great – it is just what was needed!

Having said that, I am also a realist. I am aware that in parts of the country things have 'just not happened'. Much work needs to be done to help these Districts, Counties and Areas to catch up, but I am sure that with time, they will.

Part of the reason for success in any part of the country has been the appointment of the right person to take on the District Explorer Scout Commissioner (DESC) role. The DESC is the key appointment in Explorer Scouting and we have evidence that where the right person has been appointed to the job ('a round peg in a round hole'), the Section has taken off like a rocket.

I have been surprised, however, at how few DESCs have been able to see the need for a District Explorer Scout Administrator (DESA) to help them. The new DESA Support Pack, compiled by Chris Brammer from Cheshire (a member of my Support Team) should help everyone to understand this important role a little more clearly. Have a look at it on [www.ScoutBase.org](http://www.ScoutBase.org) or get hold of the eight factsheets from the Scout Information Centre (0845 300 1818).

I am also acutely aware that many Leaders working in Explorer Scouting are close to 'burn out'. Implementing the new Section in the face of entrenched positions and prejudices has taken its toll. Can I ask all adult Leaders, whatever your role in Scouting, to take note of this state of affairs? Treat your Explorer Scout



The Duke of Edinburgh's Award  
**TAKE THE CHALLENGE**

Leadership teams with care and make sure that they are well supported.

Running a balanced programme has been one of the most challenging areas for DESCs and ESLs. I know the amount of published programme material directed specifically at Explorer Scouts is relatively limited. The good news is that we are in the process of doing something about that deficiency – in the first half of 2004, new programme material for all five Sections will be developed and made available. Keep an eye out for this important development.

#### YOUNG LEADERS

By all accounts the Young Leaders' Scheme has been one of the major successes of the new Explorer Scout programme. This additional opportunity for 14-18 years olds has been widely welcomed. Many of the training modules have already been run across the country. Indeed, many Explorer Scout Units have been using some of the YL training modules with Explorer Scouts who are not Young Leaders. The Young Leaders' Badge (to be awarded after completion of *Module A – Prepare for take-off*) is now available to Badge Secretaries via Outdoors.

At the launch of the new Adult Training Scheme at the University of Warwick last autumn, it was announced that seven of the 11 Young Leader modules will receive some recognition in the new Adult Training Scheme. This adds considerable value to the training that we provide to our Young Leaders.

Hopefully, many people will see merit in being Young Leaders and go on to become Adult Leaders in due course. In my view, the Young Leaders' Scheme is an Adult Leader gold mine – so let's get mining! The factsheets (FS460000/1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8) are there to help – contact the Scout Information Centre or use ScoutBase.

#### AWARDS GALORE!

The new Awards Scheme has started to take off. I have been privileged to attend a



CALLUM FARQUHAR

number of events up and down the country where Chief Scout's Platinum and Diamond Awards (and their partner Duke of Edinburgh Awards) have been presented. While the Awards compliment the Balanced Programme, the sense of achievement exhibited by Award recipients is clearly apparent.

I was pleased to note the large number of Explorer Scouts who attended the Queen's Scout Award receptions in York Minster in March 2003 and at the Guildhall in December. I hope this number will increase to the extent that two such receptions each year will not be enough to cope with the demand. I look forward to seeing even more Explorer Scouts attend the Annual Parade of Queen's Scouts at Windsor Castle next April.

As the months have passed, the number of Explorer Scouts enrolling for the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards continues to rise. The Award Programme offers an ideal method for providing recognition for the activities that an Explorer Scout completes, along with our own Awards. Our aim is that every Explorer Scout should have the opportunity to register for the Award when they join the Section.

It is important that registration takes place early on, as activities can only be



# PROGRAMMES ON A PLATE

THIS MONTH'S THEME IS INTERNATIONAL, WRITTEN BY MEL KESTEVEN

TIME	ACTIVITY	ZONE	METHOD	INSTRUCTIONS
One or two hours plus time to prepare	Presentation and election	International	Technology, Research	Select a few possible destinations for an international trip and put the place-names in a hat. Groups of Explorer Scouts pull out a destination and research it. They put together a presentation, using the medium of their choice, to promote their destination, including costing, travel arrangements and things to do. The entire Unit or District then votes for the destination they would most like to visit.
Long term (six months)	International Group Award	International	Working with others, Projects	Join together with a Scout Group, Scout Network or other Explorer Scout Unit to carry out the International Group Award (see <i>Unit Essentials</i> for details).
20 mins	Phrase book snap	International	Game	Provide several pairs of cards with corresponding phrases in another language (or several others). For example, 'Bonjour' goes with 'Au revoir' (French), 'Dolch yn fawr' goes with 'Croeso' (Welsh), 'Wo ist das?' goes with 'Das ist...' (German). The Explorers each have a card and move around the room talking to one another, reading the phrase and trying to find or work out their matching pair.
One evening	Women's rights	International, Values	Discussion, Visit	Discuss the attitudes to women in different societies (see Unit programmes comparing the roles of women in the UK and Uganda). Is equality of the sexes under the Law the mark of a 'civilised' society? Discuss the roles of women in businesses, in the home and in Scouting. Should there ever be a female Chief Scout? This discussion could be timed to coincide with International Women's Day, organised by the United Nations on March 8. See <a href="http://www.un.org/events/women/lwd">www.un.org/events/women/lwd</a> for details.
24 hours, 27-29 February	24 hour famine	International, Values, Community service	Residential experiences, Games, Projects	Join in World Vision's 24 Hour Famine, raising money to help fight starvation and malnutrition among the world's poorest children. If the Unit stays together for the entire 24 hours, lots of related activities can be planned (as well as some fun ones to keep their minds off rumbling tums)! For more information see <a href="http://www.worldvision.org.uk">www.worldvision.org.uk</a>
Long term project	Young co-operative	International, Values	Working together, Projects	Get in touch with the Young Co-operatives scheme at <a href="http://www.traidcraft.org.uk">www.traidcraft.org.uk</a> . They will provide all the information you need to start a long-term project as a co-operative, selling fairly-traded products from abroad.

## GAMES FOR EXPLORERS

by Mel Kesteven

If you have any good games that you play with Explorer Scouts, either to build skills, relationships and leadership or just to use up energy and have fun, please share them with us! Send them to the *Scouting Magazine* office at the usual address or [scouting.magazine@scout.org.uk](mailto:scouting.magazine@scout.org.uk) marking the correspondence 'Explorer Scouts'.

### FOUR-WAY FOOTBALL

This is a great and very simple game. It can be easily converted to Hockey and Netball, with sufficient equipment. I was introduced to it by the Warrington East Explorer Scouts at their event in Cheshire, Explore '03.

- Set up a square pitch with four goals either in the corners or half way along each side.
- Divide the Explorer Scouts into four teams.
- Put a football in the middle.
- Blow the whistle.
- The aim is to score in any goal except your own, and to keep the ball away from your own goal. The winner is the team that has the fewest goals scored against them.
- When a goal is scored, each team has to go back to their corner and the ball returns to the middle to restart the game.

In Cheshire, they played with five teams, to keep the teams smaller and to fit in with the teams for the rest of the weekend. This worked well, as the team who conceded each goal then came off the pitch and let the resting team come on.

The District Executive Committee is pivotal to the success of Explorer Scouting. However, many District Executive Committees have not understood the key part that they have to play. Another Factsheet (FS452005) covers this subject, and those who have read it have found it extremely useful.

### LOOKING AHEAD

So much for the past, but what about the next 12 months?

A small team is currently working on a new Programme Resource for Scouts, Explorer Scouts and Members of the

Scout Network. Based on practical programme ideas, this resource should help Adult Leaders to help Explorer Scouts develop some of the skills that will help them become more effective in the governance of the Section. It will also help them to develop useful leadership and life skills. We hope to have this resource ready to launch by September 2004.

We are running a series of induction and training days for DESCs in the first half of 2004. They will revisit some of the key issues that have been covered in the DESC courses and allow DESCs to meet members of my Support Team and ask questions. Dates have been circulated in the Christmas DESC newsletter.

We are currently developing a strategy with members of the International Team to promote the Explorer Belt – the 'experience of a lifetime'. We are updating the Factsheets on the Explorer Belt to supplement the material in the main Sectional Resources, and hope to establish a network of Explorer Belt advisors across the UK.

Later this year, we begin the process of trying to assess the strengths and weaknesses of our new programme for all Sections. The first part of this process will be a web-based questionnaire for you to complete (details in a future issue). Please take the time to tell us your views.

Once we have identified the issues of greatest concern to Explorer Scouts and their Leaders, we will be conducting a series of focus group meetings to concentrate on them in more detail.

Finally, I would like to pay particular tribute to the work that has been done in the past year by members of my Support Team, who currently are: Gordon Weston (CC, Buckinghamshire), Chris Brammer (ESL, Warrington East District), Mel Kesteven (ACC (ES) and ESL, Gloucestershire), Tom Ovenstone (Programme Adviser, Gilwell Park) and, until recently Tim Pike (Programme Manager, Gilwell Park).

All have worked tirelessly to help me to support you – the Leaders who make our Section tick.

So, how can I sum up 'the State of the Explorer Scout Nation'? From my viewpoint, we are in great shape, but in some parts of the country much work still needs to be done. We cannot rely on the enthusiasm generated by something new. We cannot become complacent.

Let's enjoy our success to date and continue to build on it! Best of luck. ■

back-dated three months from the date the Record Book is issued.

If you have any questions regarding the operation of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award through Scouting, please contact your County/Area or District Adviser for the Award for more details.

### SWELLING THE RANKS

While all of this is heartening and reflects well on the tremendous work being done by many people, the job of bedding the new Section in is not quite done. We must now turn our attention to another facet of Explorer Scouting – the process of recruiting Members from the Scout Section and the process of ensuring all Explorer Scouts become Members of the Scout Network.

If we are to ensure the long-term success of Explorer Scouting, and provide the adult Leaders of the future, we must not forget how we establish good working relations with the Sections 'on either side'. Now is the time to start this dialogue, if you have not started one already!

The 'issues' surrounding Partnership Agreements seem to have faded away, in most cases. Most Districts have adopted a pragmatic approach and started to build agreements from the ground up: they have identified the things that can be agreed and left the rest for another day. Trust has been established between the District and supporting Groups or other Scouting bodies, and Explorer Scouting has been the winner.

We would encourage you to review all Partnership Agreements regularly until you have ironed out some of the more pressing areas of disagreement. Factsheets (FS452001/2/3) are available from ScoutBase and the Scout Information Centre.

### MONEY MONEY MONEY

Explorer Scout finances remain a thorny topic for many. It should be clear that no Section can survive without a sound financial base. In Explorer Scouting, this responsibility lies with the District Executive Committee, although each Explorer Scout Unit should be encouraged to have its own bank account.

A Factsheet (FS452013) covering Section finances, and some of the issues you will face in this area, is available on ScoutBase or from the Scout Information Centre.