



ON PARADE: Celebrations for St George's Day in Lincoln – St George is also Scouting's patron saint. Right, new Chief Scout Bear Grylls. Far right, the movement's founder Lord Baden-Powell.

Scout recruits rally to Bear necessities

ADVENTUROUS youngsters in Lincolnshire have boosted a national surge in recruits to the Scouting movement.

The movement now led by intrepid adventurer Bear Grylls has seen its biggest growth since 1972 and UK membership is nearing 500,000.

And partly it has Lincolnshire to thank with 307 county youngsters donning their woggles and signing up – the second largest boost after Hertfordshire.

But while most people think of Scouting as "dyb, dyb, dyb" and continually tying a range of knots, Scouts are keen to dispel the myth that this is what modern scouting is all about.

It is changes to the movement – such as the introduction of new badges including snow-boarding, street sports and water-skiing – that are thought to have contributed to the surge in members.

Lincolnshire Explorer Scout Emily Cashmore, 13, said: "Scouting is awesome."

"I totally love being involved. You

EXPERT VIEW

Ian Cashmore, Lincolnshire Scouting district commissioner

The rise in popularity is mainly down to the fact that young people want to get out and about and be more active.

They are looking for adventurous and exciting activities, which are being cut back on in schools because of

health and safety fears.

The new badges we introduced in 2007 have helped. During the 1970s and 1980s, Scouting took a bit of a dip because it had been running for 60-70 years and I think it had just become a bit stale.

In the last five or six



years, Scouting has started listening more to what young people want to do. The biggest problem is attracting adults although we have seen a rise here.

by Louise Wallace

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get to do so many amazing activities that you just wouldn't get to do elsewhere.

"I joined in 2003 and I would definitely encourage others to join."

The total number of people

involved in scouting in Lincolnshire went up from 5,659 to 5,966 this year alone.

In 2007, the numbers were only just above 4,000.

And the number of girls joining has grown.

It went up from 696 to 762 between 2009 and January this year.

The spike in numbers also means that waiting lists have appeared.

There are now around 300 people on Lincolnshire's list as part of 33,000 nationally.

The boom means there is a need for more adults to give up their time

for the movement, even though Lincolnshire has seen an increase in helpers in recent years.

Leader Sandra Donner, of Monks Road, Lincoln, said: "I've been a Beaver leader for many years now and I love it."

"I decided to get involved because I wanted to give something back to young people in my community."

"I have really benefited as well."

"The skills I have developed as leader I've been able to transfer to my day job and that's been really important for me."

The appointment of adventurer Bear Grylls as Chief Scout a year ago is seen as another big attraction.

On hearing the news he said: "Scouting is empowering, wild and fun and offers so many adventure-based activities for young people and adults alike."

"My goal is for every young person who wants to be involved in Scouting to be able to be, so I hope I inspire even more adults to volunteer to make this happen."

In 1998 Grylls achieved his childhood dream and conquered Everest aged 23 – just 18 months after breaking his back.

He crossed the Arctic in an open rigid inflatable boat in 2003.

HAS SCOUTING CHANGED YOUR LIFE?

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