



**TEAMWORK:** The Deeping St James unit in action.

# Scouting making a big comeback

**LIKE** a fading fashion fad only popular with parents, the world of Scouting seemed to have lost its grip on the imaginations of the young.

But by mixing new with the traditional, Scouting looks to be on the up and never more so in rural Lincolnshire where youngsters at the forefront of a national revival.

Scout leaders in Lincolnshire, which includes the Deepings, are celebrating after 307 new members joined up – a 5.4 per cent leap in numbers since last January.

The growth in the county is the second largest in the UK and teenagers are the fastest-growing group, with an increase of 16.8 per cent since 2001. The surge has helped the country's Scouts, founded by Lord Baden Powell and cham-



By **ASHA MEHTA**

[asha.mehta@peterboroughtoday.co.uk](mailto:asha.mehta@peterboroughtoday.co.uk)

pioning the motto "Be prepared", reach a 38 year high in membership.

Groups in the Deepings, which include the Deeping St James and Market Deeping units, claim the combination of cooler new badges as well as a focus on the great outdoors have helped them thrive.

Roger Gale is Scout leader for the Deeping St James group, which has two Scout troops with about 45 members. They meet on Wednesday and Friday evenings at their base in Church Street.

He said: "I've been a Scout leader for five years but when I started, there were 20 members.

"In the last three to four years, the numbers have increased substantially.



**ACTIVITIES:** Roger Gale and Harry Oakley.

He added: "We had to open another troop. New badges include computer studies and various modern communications, which has helped make Scouting more cool.

"But I believe the reason it's getting popular again is that youngsters still like to take part in outdoor challenges and activities. We do traditional things such as camping and canoeing."

Harry Oakley (13) has been a Scout for two-and-a-half years and said: "It's enjoyable, there are lots of things to do.

"There are a wide range of badges and it's become cooler because we do more hands on stuff.

"People used to think it was just about knots."

Scouts are aged between 10 and 14 and after that, they can join the explorers.

Anthony Hockey, district commissioner for Stamford and Bourne, which covers the Deepings, said: "It's about taking part, making new friends, going to new places and tackling new adventures."