

## Duke of Edinburgh Special

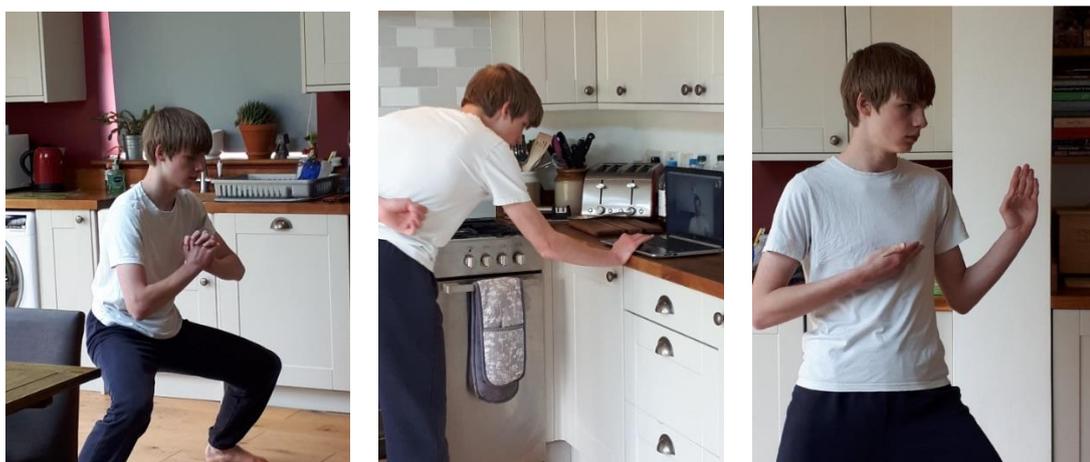
The Duke of Edinburgh Awards continues at Thamesmead School, despite coronavirus, and perhaps, importantly because of it. The Awards encourage us to keep physically (and mentally) healthy, develop our knowledge, skills and talents as well as spend time helping our families and communities. This is possible because of changes made by the Duke of Edinburgh enabling our young people to continue with their awards, and if they need further inspiration, visit <https://www.dofe.org/dofewithadifference/>.

We also want to celebrate some of your successes so far and share the pride we feel as parents and as a school. Below are contributions from our parents about their sons and daughters, publicly recognising their effort and achievement. We hope it offers inspiration and support to all our young people and particularly those working towards their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Every year I see the Duke of Edinburgh programme lifting the aspirations and ambitions of our students. This year is no different. Thank you to everyone – parents, assessors and our young people -- who are making this happen.

Mr S Barrett  
Duke of Edinburgh Programme Manager

Rhys has been working hard both before and during lockdown on his karate. Before lockdown, Rhys would attend karate on a Friday evening at Ashley Dojo and practice at least twice a week at home. Now, during lockdown, Rhys is having weekly online sessions with his Sensei and is continuing to practice twice a week. He has now completed this section of his DofE.



I am immensely proud of how Rhys has actively searched for ways to continue his Silver DofE during lockdown. It would have been remarkably simple for him to use it as a reason to put his activities on hold, instead he has searched for flexible alternatives. He continues to strive to meet his goals with quiet determination.

I am extremely proud of Lola taking part in DofE. She has very much enjoyed volunteering at Spelthorne Gymnastics Club, working with the young gymnasts - helping them to achieve their badges and certificates. This was a real confidence boost for Lola and it was lovely to see the relationship she built with the gymnasts she was teaching.



I am sending you this email to tell you about the new physical skill Callum is working towards. Callum is a big fan of Formula 1 driving and decided to learn a new skill of Go -Kart racing. Callum has driven a go kart before but has never done any racing so he did a race school day at Sandown Park which enabled him to be able to join the In Kart Race Championship which consisted of 10 races with about 21 drivers in Callum's age range. The In Kart consisted of a qualifying

race and then an A and B final. Callum did really well and won the B final 3 times and then qualified in the A final twice. Unfortunately, due to the corona virus, all races have been suspended so hopefully when it starts again Callum will hopefully win the A final!

As you may know, Verity was taking part in the cookery course run at the school that was all about how to cook on a budget. They had only completed one assessment but, throughout the lockdown and inspired by her work on the course, Verity has been cooking the evening meal for the family a minimum of once a week and has tried out a great many things! She is vegetarian and the course has encouraged her to consider the cost of ingredients and their nutrition so, for example this week she made very healthy and nutritious 'bean burgers'! Verity's example has created some competition in the family and even her older brother (ex-Thamesmead), Ethan, has started to cook so DofE involvement has been very positive for all of us through lockdown!





Ross has been competing in rugby for the last 8 years and has always been an enthusiastic team member - he is always happy to be part of the team and let others lead him. When he started to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh award after letting his coaches know what he was doing, he started to work even harder, so much so that the staff at London Irish made him captain. He has taken to his new position very well, leading his team to new highs. I am especially proud of the way he now talks to the officials on match day.

One thing that impressed me with Ollie this year was his skiing. Ollie had wanted to ski for some time and was really looking forward to the school ski trip. With that in mind we set about booking him some ski lessons at Guildford Ski slope and he took to it immediately. After a four week course he continued with open ski and the occasional further lesson but the instructor couldn't believe he had never skied until then. On the school ski trip, he made it into the top group and was emailing us lots of wonderful photos of how much fun he was having. As a result of DofE he has learnt a skill that he can use with us as a family and friends in later life.



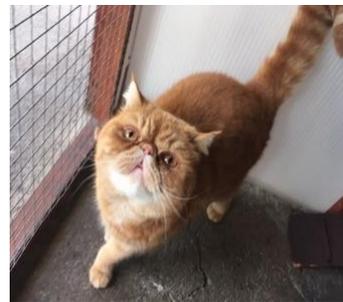
Here is a picture of Elodie at a Beaver Scout meeting, before lockdown. Elodie is in charge of a group of children, showing them how to make a water filter, using different sizes of stones and grit to filter the dirty water through. She has their attention and they all helped to build the filter. She confidently spoke to the children, helping them understand how the filter would work. They enjoyed it and were surprised seeing how good the results were. Although they all decided the water still wasn't something they'd like to drink, as it was still not quite like tap water!

Amelia volunteered at the cattery in Hampton every Sunday morning for one hour for 3 months. She didn't miss a single week and really loved meeting different cats. Her duties were to help clear out the cages, feed the cats but best of all play with the cats. At Christmas she helped decorate the cattery by decorating the Christmas tree the owner gave them.

Amelia told me each week the different cats that were there. Some were quite timid, some more friendly and some that were hard to pick up and she had to chase them into a corner in order to put them back in their crates. Although she didn't like to say she had a favourite, she really did love one called Warlow-Luca. It had such a squashy face!

At home we have a dog and two guinea pigs and we cannot have cats because I am allergic to them so this was a real treat for her to go every week. She would happily volunteer there again and would hope to do so once lockdown is over.

Here are some photos she took of her time there. The third photo is Warlow- Luca.



I was particularly impressed with Miles's enthusiasm as he worked through the first-aid and emergency procedures training on Sam learning; viewing each of the videos in turn and then completing the quiz questions. Miles has previously been on a first aid course with the army cadets and he recalled many of the procedures needed in the relevant first-aid emergencies. He viewed the exercise as a great refresher and I think he feels confident that he could provide first aid in an emergency situation to his peers or in the community if anyone was in need of assistance.

Ava's father and I are extremely proud of Ava's continual optimism, and volunteering to help, with life in lockdown. Ava stepped in and volunteered to help her youngest brother in his home school learning with tricky fractions and building 3D shapes.



Ava had volunteered to help me re-decorate our town house in the Easter holidays, no mean feat! We completed this task with a lot of fun, laughter and paint covered hands and feet. She has cooked meals for us, taken turns in walking the dogs and washing up!

Ava's attitude and commitment to her school work and this new temporary way of life has been an inspiration to us all.

Katy is a member of a dance school where she spends 9 hours a week doing a range of dance classes so it was the perfect choice for her six months physical section. Although her classes have not been running during the lockdown, Katy has managed to continue her dance training at home with the support of her dance teacher. Continuing to dance during this difficult time has had so many benefits as it has given Katy a structure to her day, whilst keeping her fit and active. Happily, by training regularly and sending videos of her progress to her dance teacher, she has been able to get her Duke of Edinburgh physical section completed and signed off.



Ellie is particularly passionate about Scouting. She joined 1st Charlton Scout Group at age 6 and has been a Beaver, Cub, Scout and in January moved up to become an Explorer Scout. Ellie volunteers and helps run Beavers (from September 2018) at 1st Charlton Scout Group. I am very proud of Ellie's commitment to her volunteering within Scouting. She contributes to running the evening, showing the young people good leadership skills, communication and team work. Ellie was also asked to help on various Scouting events this year including Cubs District Camp, Scoutabout and Wings - unfortunately they have had to be postponed until 2021.



Scouting has enabled Ellie to build on her own skills and experiences plus helping others, providing her with "skills for life". Ellie achieved her Chief Scouts Gold Award, unfortunately the actual presentation was cancelled in March due to the Coronavirus so her certificate was sent in the post.