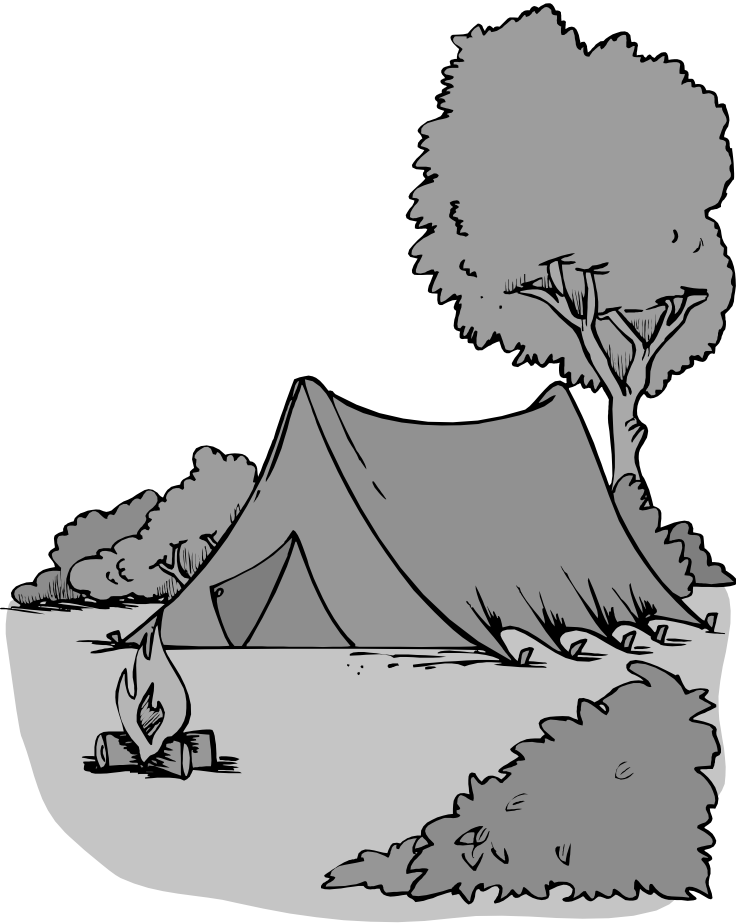


FEBRUARY 2008

Woodsmoke



www.abbotslanglescouts.org.uk

Don't forget the ...

* **Group Family Camp** *

Friday 27th - Sunday 28th June 2008

Phasels Wood Scout Camp Site



Clive's Chat

The 2007 Centenary Year has finally come to an end and what a year it was with non-stop events, activities and achievements. We had the Founders Day celebrations, a swimming gala, the Centenary Camp (what memorable weather), the Sunrise celebrations and a visit to the World Scout Jamboree to name but a few.

Many congratulations to the Cubs and Scouts who have completed their respective Chief Scout Awards during the Autumn term. They were

Silver Chief Scouts Award - Thomas Awcock, Scott Denton and Harry Drake

Gold Chief Scouts Award - Daniel Lowrie and Christopher Winder

These latest achievements mean that the final tally for 2007 was a total of 11 Cubs who completed their Silver Chief Scouts Award and 18 Scouts who were awarded the Gold Chief Scouts Award. Congratulations to all Cubs and Scouts for your commitment and high level of success.

Other successes and accomplishments in the Group last term included victory for the 3rd year in succession for the Scout Troop in the District Triathlon. Congratulations to the winning team of Matthew Bowden, Max Halcomb, Matthew Johnson and Nikhil Kotecha and well done to the other participants. The Troop also entered a relatively young and inexperienced team in the Green Beret in November. They had a very enjoyable weekend and achieved 43rd place out of 111 teams from across the County

The Albatross Explorer Unit entered 3 teams into the Peak Assault in October for the first time. It was a gruelling competition for our young and inexperienced Explorers and tested their best orienteering skills and physical prowess to the full.

Plans for 2008 are already in progress and the main event to put in the diary is the Group Family Camp at Phasels Wood on the weekend of 27th - 29th June.

Finally, I would like to make another plea for any adult who would like to take on a leadership role. Our waiting lists continue to grow, for Beavers and Scouts particularly, which means that many children in the community are not able to enjoy all the aspects that scouting has to offer. Yes, it can be quite time consuming but extremely rewarding. We have only 8 adult leaders and instructors for the whole group. Please give me a call.

Clive Winder
Group Scout Leader

Remembrance Day Parade





Scout Troop Achievements

The Autumn Term resulted in another 2 Gold Chief Scouts Awards following the completion of personal challenges. Many congratulations to Daniel Lowrie and Christopher Winder on their excellent achievement. This means that a total of 18 Gold Chief Scouts Awards were awarded during 2007, a superb effort from the Scouts concerned.

Congratulations also to -----

- Greg Benson, Danny Brocklehurst, Liam Goodman, Sean Hinks and Finlay Potiuk on completing their Adventure Challenge
- Liam Goodman, Sean Moore and Sam Reeve on completing 10 Nights Away

Bravo bravissimo

Clive

Green Beret Challenge 2007

The Green Beret challenge is a tough competition that's held every November, which makes it very cold and even more challenging for the scouts who enter. This year's competition was held at Tolmers campsite over the weekend of the 16th - 18th November. To compete, a team must have 6 people. Our troop only had 5 who were: Sam Reeve, Christopher Winder, Daniel Lowrie, Jasper Gillespie and Finlay Potiuk.

We set off from Abbots Langley HQ at 6pm in the minibus heading for Tolmers campsite near Potters Bar. We arrived quite late and it was already dark. We found the rest of the North Watford groups and a site to pitch our tents. Unfortunately, someone had put in the wrong corner poles for the garage tent (which was used for cooking)! Sharon, our ever faithful assistant leader offered to go back to the HQ and get them.

While Clive was busying himself with camp admin, he left the team to pitch the sleeping tent which was very large, very complicated and took us over an hour to erect. Eventually we managed to erect the tent, with Clive's help. We then helped Sharon with the corner poles for the garage tent, which must have weighed about a tonne !

After a cold and very short nights sleep, the team got up and found their new member, Matthew, who was lent to us by the 9th North Watford and who was very good at running. After a brief, but hearty breakfast, we were all ready to go out and attack the day bases apart

from our leader, Chris. His strategy was that if we left later, the queues wouldn't be so big and we would get more done. However, this would have worked if we had left just 15 minutes earlier which would have given us more time to do more bases.

After the team got kitted out, we went and found all of the day bases, checked in and did a few – not very successfully, but to the best of our ability (as scouts – we “did our best” !). The objective was to get 50 points at each base, but we only managed to get 1 x 50 point until we had to go to our orienteering session, which was at 11 o'clock. We got there, got the map and checked in and then we left.

Our esteemed leader (Chris) at this stage, came up with another strategy – he felt we had plenty of time and there was no need to run, but his strategy backfired as we got hardly any points and we ran out of time. After the orienteering we went back to camp for lunch then went back out for another try at the day bases. We did OK, but then it was 1 o'clock and time for our assault course. This was probably the most fun we had all weekend.

The course started off with the whole team having to run and follow a trail of coloured paper on the ground. We had 6 minutes to get to each station and 6 minutes to complete the challenge in each station.

We were going around with another team and it wasn't supposed to be competitive, but boys being

boys we made it into a competition and the other team became our rivals. We beat them in most challenges but some people in our group failed to complete some stage. I did not complete the commando crawl along the rope because I was going too fast, making the rope shake and falling off at the end. I tried again and again, but was unable to complete the task. Also, Matthew, our “lent body”, although an exceptionally fast runner, could not manage to jump over a waist high rope – he must have thought the rope was the finishing line for the run, trying to break through instead of jumping over !

Our group completed the rest of the stations with great ease. The final station, the aerial assault course, was apparently extremely hard and there was very little time to get around it. However, our team completely dazzled the judges when we managed to get around it extremely quickly. After this, we went and completed most of the day bases and we were able to get 2 more sets of 50 points. Then it was back to camp to have a meal and a small rest before getting back out to complete the night bases. It was pitch black and we had to use our torches.

We managed to get a few sets of 50 points, but on some stations, we failed miserably. On one station we had to get a rope out of a hole that had balls and rings on it, which was extremely hard and we had 10 minutes to do it in. We finally did it with complete luck and after our celebrations, we realised we had

taken a lot longer than 10 minutes and therefore, crushingly didn't get many points.

We did approx 2 more challenges after this. One of them was to play games and we were the last team to do it. There was '4 in a row', which we won and Jenga. When we had finished, before it nearly collapsed, it was the most brilliant piece of artwork ever. The leaning tower of Jenga went up, then slanted left, then right then went straight up again. One of the leaders looked at the Jenga and was absolutely stunned. He pulled out his phone and took a photo of it and said just for the Jenga, they would give us 50 points – well earned we thought!

We then went back to base, had a mug of hot chocolate and drifted off to sleep like the logs around us.

The next morning, we put our uniforms on and found out we came 48th out of 111 teams, which all in all we were quite pleased with. We then returned to camp, packed up our troubles in our old kit bags and went home. What a tiring yet enjoyable weekend we all had !

Written by Sam Reeve, Eagles

Abbots Langley Scout Fellowship

Trip to St Briavels Castle.

Friday 19th October-Sunday 21st October 2007

Well 16 of us travelled to stay at a very unique YHA at St Briavels, a moated Norman Castle, once the hunting lodge of King John, at the base of the Wye Valley. Once we had all met up at the local hostelry we went back to bagsey our bunks. The Boys dorm was in the old prison and a bit dark, however the girl's dorm was light and airy and in the Queen's wing. In such an old building reportedly being haunted everything creaked from the floor boards to the bunk beds, which made creeping into bed in the dark trying not to wake your roomies very difficult, especially if people get the giggles triggered by the excess squeaking.

A good night's sleep was had by all; however there were reports of strange noises during the night. Was it the ghosts



coming to get us? No I don't think so, just snoring from the boy's dorm. After a hearty breakfast supplied by the YHA we broke up into groups for the days activities. Some of the boys went cycling to Afan forest which proved to be an exhilarating and exciting ride and by the look of them when they got back, rather muddy and dirty.

We stepped out from the castle into the perfect autumn morning; a chill in the air, bright blue sky above, but below the vista of the wooded Wye Valley was covered with a blanket of mist. We descended before picking up the track to Linder Farm and down to the Wye itself at Bigsweir Bridge. On the way passing a shooting party (men and dogs), who seemed to be returning empty handed to their vehicles.



After crossing the River Wye, we turned away from the river and headed steeply up the side of the valley (some of us almost on all-fours) and onto Llandogo. In Bargain

Wood territory we took a break and one of the party took this opportunity to pass round some explosive sour sweets, you should have seen the looks on the faces of their unsuspecting victims... Then it was on to lunch in Tintern Pava and the obliging Moon and Sixpence to fill our bellies for the return journey. Once on the move again we walked along the banks of the river and picked up the Offa's Dyke path before tackling the seemingly never-ending ascent on

narrow paths through woods and then finally on to the lanes that would take us back to St Briavels. Many of our number were on their last legs when we finally made it back to the castle just in time for the banquet held in our honour.



Everyone looked fab dressed up in various medieval themed outfits for the banquet and after names in a hat the Lord and Lady were picked after some failed rigging (Ron and Ann you got off lightly) Bib and our very own Pauline (Woodsmoke) Styles were the lucky unexpected volunteers however they fell into character with ease and entertained us all.

The meal was broth, followed by chicken, corn on the cob and potatoes all eaten with our fingers as we kept being reminded cutlery was not available way back then and woe betide anyone who asked for tomato sauce!! Salt was available to season the food however you had to ask the Lord if he would pass the salt and depending on his mood



he did oblige. Back in the olden days the Lord and Lady had food tasters to foil any attempt on their life, as pudding was a slice of chocolate gateau (the allocated food tasters took rather larger bites

than in the previous courses. During the banquet our motley crew were joined by four other families on half term breaks including one who had travelled all the way from Germany.



Now the entertainment was us. Everyone had a number under their plate and if the Lord called out your number you had to get up and entertain the room. Everything from Alice the Camel, knock knock jokes and nursery rhythms in English and German were recited, and not to forget Latin. Along with the rule if the Lord stood up we all had to stand up which made trying to consume the broth a little tricky!

After the meal some still in costume went to the Chapel, not for prayer (however some of that did unexpectedly take place) but to watch the Rugby World cup final England vs South Africa. The atmosphere was great and we were robbed, the praying didn't help it was a try!!!! After the game we joined the rest of our party in the King's Chamber which had been converted into a large lounge with a fire we stayed there to the small hours of the next morning putting the world to right, along with the odd sword fight that broke out between our Medieval knights, a nun and any by-standers.

Sunday morning saw many of us feeling a little achy

BOXING DAY WALK 2007

“You’ve GOT to come on The Boxing Day walk” they all said to me during the weeks leading up to the event. So I duly arrived at Love Lane for the 10.30 am departure where Friends, Families and Newbies greeted each other with enthusiasm, and we were off



Chairman taking the commemorative photo at “Kitty Corner”

The going was a bit wet in places and I distinctly remember thinking if I arrive in one piece without having fallen head first from the stile into a slippery patch I will have done well.

The company comprised 29¹/₂ and we were met at the Holly Bush, Potters Crouch, by several more where it was standing room only in the bar.

As we crossed the bridges over the motorway I was somewhat bemused to see the tradition of waving at the passing traffic, and being very excited when we got lots of waves back. I asked the

WE NEED YOU



For fun and games
Please apply if you have Enthusiasm and a
Sense of Humour!!

**All sections need more leaders.
We are one of the largest Groups in the
District but operating with only half
the leaders we require. Its good fun
and very rewarding. Training, uniform
and ear defenders provided. Please
help as they are your children.**

Clive

DIARY DATES

February

23rd-24th	Chiltern Challenge—Phasels Wood	Explorers
29th-2nd	Scouting Challenge Weekend—Lees	Explorers

March

15th	Family Hike	Beavers
17th	Executive Meeting	Exec Committee
18th	Mystery Food Evening—HQ	Explorers
18th	Talk on the Jamboree Visit	Ladies Guild

April

12-13th	District Night Owls Competition	Scouts
15th	Demonstration on hanging baskets	Ladies Guild
20th	St. George's Day Parade	ALL
23rd	Jumble Sale	ALL
26th	Jumble Sale	ALL
30th	Wide Games—Mystery Location	Explorers

May

9th	Athletics Badge—Woodside Stadium	Cubs
8th-11th	Expedition Weekend	Explorers
16th	Group AGM	ALL
19th	Executive Meeting	Exec Committee

June

14th	Carnival	ALL
27-29th	Group Family Camp	ALL

July

12th	Cracknell Shield Competition, Lees	Cubs
21st	Group AGM	ALL
27th—3rd	Summer Camp	Scouts

question “how many years have you been doing this?” which couldn’t be answered at the time, and is still heavily being debated.

On arriving at the watering hole (which had opened before we got there—how dare they) refreshments were on tap and the singing started.. Everyone was in good voice and I’ve never heard a Rule Britannia better sung (except for the last time!)

Then onwards and past the infamous “Pee” corner. Some reference from AA Milne? Maybe not, but only a secret told to those who venture out for this traditional walk. On the way to the White Hart for our second stop of the day, I was able to meet some of the other people on the walk who I hadn’t met on the first half. Once there I remember being greeted by the welcome sight of sandwiches, as no-one had mentioned bringing a packed lunch. More singing ensued and I believe it was getting dark when some of us left to walk through Bedmond homeward. However, it was only a short haul when we came across The Bell and it seemed rude just to pass by. The company of fellows had dwindled slightly but a happy party stopped for one for the road, and several other members also joined in as people migrated homewards.

It was at this point that I became acquainted with most of the Chalk and Sharpe families junior members and think that probably meant I had now met all 28^{1/2} other companions. So time again passed and the last long haul homewards beckoned until we finally arrived in the middle of the village.

Now the decision was taken amongst the Newbies that it seemed a shame to end such a pleasant stroll and go our separate ways, and so it was decided to continue to The Royal Oak for last man standing. I’m afraid I can’t make this claim to fame, as I am a Lady (or am I getting confused with the St. Brievals trip?). I can honestly say it was the longest walk in it’s history, but what a hoot, and a great way to spend a day with the group of wonderful people! Next year I’ll be sure to pack my sandwiches.

A N Ewbie



ALBBATROSS E.S.U.

Explorers have had a busy season since they took part so successfully in the Peak Assault last October. An executive committee was formed to help Alison & Rob with some of the 'backroom' stuff that goes with running a big unit and has held two meetings so far. Parents have also been great, volunteering their help for numerous activities.

The Unit held a fundraising Quiz night organised by Alison, which was very successful and raised a substantial sum towards paying for equipment. Everyone enjoyed the event and some great prizes had been donated and thanks must also go to the two Quizmasters for making the evening such fun.

Many Explorers have already embarked on their Duke of Edinburgh's Award and their Platinum Chief Scouts awards and as part of their activities, trees have been planted at Phasels Wood, some Explorers are assisting with Cubs and Scouts and many made bird boxes to be sited at Phasels Wood.

The Chiltern Challenge is coming up and many Explorers have entered, so we wish them the best of luck. With lighter nights on the way, the Unit has a full program to look forward to in the next couple of months.



Julia Sugden

Peak Assault – The Team C Account

It was a cold October evening when the coaches carrying the Watford North Explorer teams departed from Phasels Wood on what would be a long journey up to Cumbria. It was a pleasant journey there as people were wondering what might lay ahead and were talking of the events which were soon to follow.

As we approached our destination, it was getting into the early hours of the morning and soon enough, we were unloaded and walking to our campsite. We pitched our tents and went straight to sleep.

Early the next morning, Albatross's three teams were up and ready for their kit inspections. The first team was called, it was team C. Team C consisted of Fiona, Anna, Luke, Chris Ward, George and myself. The kit inspection took place in quite a picturesque place, a barn. We unpacked our kit and soon after we were at the start/finish line. Our picture was taken, our maps handed to us and the clock started. It had started.

The first part of the competition seemed quite fun. Everyone was high spirited and full of hope however it didn't take long for that to disappear. The first few points seem to go well and a few points were clocked up. Then the mist down came. Our progress slowed and soon it was becoming a challenge, not just a stroll in the hills. Rough guesses were made on where we actually were and it turned out we were quite a way off, but we didn't know that at the time.

In the second half of the first day, we started to make our way to the overnight campsite and walked along

a route where we might have gone past a few more checkpoints, we walked and walked and started to enjoy it a bit. The hills were steep but wonderful views at the top were the rewards that awaited us there. Sadly, Chris Ward stumbled and injured his ankle. Stranded halfway up a steep mountainside we were unsure of what to do. Luckily, two leaders were nearby and managed to get Chris down and back to the overnight campsite. The rest of us decided to carry on. Nearing our check in time, the pressure was on to get back, and to get back fast. Luckily, on one of our estimated routes we stumbled upon another of our teams. We saw figures in the distance and walked nearer to them, it was Tom Redmond and his team. We were pointed in the right direction and were soon on our way back.

It was about an hour and a half to two hours after our check in time had passed, the Peak Assault team decided to send out a search party for us! We hadn't been seen for a long time and soon we were the talk of the radio waves. Our leaders back at base told us afterwards that all they could hear on the walkie talkies was "Still no sighting of Albotross team C.....Team C are still out and its getting dark". Thankfully, we made it to the Start/Finish line, about half an hours walk away from where we were meant to be. We pressed on, wanting to make it before nightfall but were stopped by an organiser and offered a lift down in a minibus. Our shattered bodies and exhausted faces lit up as we eagerly accepted the offer. We had made it through the first day of the Peak Assault.

That evening the rugby was on television. England versus France. Cheers could be heard for miles.

The following morning, we cooked breakfast, packed up our site, were checked off and were on our way. For being so late the first day we made an effort to be really early just to prove we could do it. In my opinion, the second day was a lot better. We knew where we were, most of the time, and managed to get a few points on the board. The time came to head back hopefully to the finish line. It was in our sights and a clamber down a mountainside soon brought us onto the home straight. We were approaching the finish line and our picture was taken, we crossed it and we felt good. Shattered, but good. We walked backed to base camp to find the other two teams. I feel all three accomplished something great.

We arrived back at Phasels Wood late evening ready for a nice long rest. The Peak Assault was a tough challenge. Team C may have lost in minus figures but the accomplishment was huge. We weren't a training team and we had "**Finished**", written in bold beside our team number.

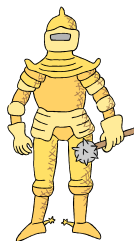
Written by Jonathan Benson, Team C.

NEWS FROM cubs

Having lost twelve of our 'oldies' to Scouts at the end of the Summer Term, we suspected that the dynamics of the Pack would change and that time for re-adjustment would be needed. Big, old shoes needed to be filled, but who would be experienced and mature enough to fill them? We would have to nurture the Pack, gently encouraging twelve Cubs to take on the responsibilities of Sixers and Seconders.

With only twenty three on the register for the first meeting back, we were surely in for a breeze..... less Cubs would mean more space, more quality time, more turns in the games, a shorter queue for drinks, spare biscuits (maybe) and more peace and calm (definitely).

Or so we thought. Alas, our coy little Cubs of the Summer had obviously concocted a cunning plan to hit the leaders when their guards were down! They returned on the first week FULL of action, noise, more action followed by even more noise! In the interests of our hearing and sanity, we set forth the following week, armour fixed firmly in place, with our new Rewards and Penalties Rules! Boring, maybe, but essential for everyone.



Here endeth our lament, because since then we have watched the Cubs grow in positive self confidence, with some showing promising leadership qualities. They have warmly welcomed into our Pack; Robert Armstrong, Timothy Cannock, James Cresswell, Tom Crosby, Oliver Dean, Connor Hill, Matthew Hives, Jack Hobbs and Fiona Waldock (who has been a great addition to our female sector of two!).

Alongside of the usual types of evenings involving games and challenges, we have made good use of the HQ by staying in and carrying out a number of stages from the Challenge Awards. Most Cubs took part in a four-week recycling project, which goes towards the Global Challenge Award.

Well done to Scott Denton, Lewis Powell, James Allan, Michael Bell, Luke Ashton, Ravi Kotecha and Nicholas Smith who all achieved their Global Challenge Award in October.

In December, we held our own Christmas Market as part of the Caring Challenge Award. It was a fairly exclusive affair, it has to be said, as it was open chiefly to families. The Cubs spent three weeks making a selection of crafts - calendars, cards and tinsel mobiles - which they sold to their generous parents at the Market! Families were invited to buy drinks, cakes and raffle tickets and to sit and chat with friends (if you could hear yourself over the festive din!). During the evening suggestions were put forward for which charity to sponsor and Cancer Research was selected. A cheque for £155 has been sent to Cancer Research from the 1st Abbots Langley Cubs. What a fabulous donation -thank you to everyone who came and supported us.



Well done to Philip Sheppard, Harry Sherwin, Ravi Kotecha, Miles Johnson, Nicholas Smith, Jamie Tearle, Toby Gamble and Dominic Faulks who all achieved their Caring Challenge Award.



Also during the term, a small group of Cubs represented our Pack at the District Volleyball Competition held at Westfield School, Watford. Having had two training sessions kindly run by Roger Allan, a team of willing volunteers gave up a Saturday in November and gave it their best shot. This proved tricky, as we were a player short and needed to 'borrow' a player from another Pack's team! A great experience, well done team - James Allan, Ellen Hurdle, Thomas Rose, Josh Coulson and Miles Johnson.

Thank you to those Cubs who attended the Remembrance Day Parade in the village and the Christingle Service at St Lawrence's Church. We had a great turn-out at both events. If you didn't manage to attend this year, please make a special effort next time, as they are very important dates in the Scouting Year.



We ended the term with lots of fun and just a hint of competition, at Hollywood Bowl. Unfortunately, many of the Cubs were performing in school concerts and were unable to attend.....(maybe that's why the leaders did so well!).



Thank you to those parents who have helped in any way during the term, it is always greatly appreciated. We look forward to seeing even more of you in the future!

Happy Cubbing!

Chris (CSL) Jo (Pack Assistant) Aisling (ACSL)



Last term the Beavers had a very busy time. It all started with Beaver Bangers in Lees Wood with a circus theme. The boys spent the day doing activities, crafts and games and all had great fun.



We also had a trip to the Hollywood Bowl where they all showed great sportsmanship and their behaviour was a credit to their parents and our group. We also went to Margaret House to sing carols, which the

residents really appreciated. The boys also had a trip to the Palace Theatre to see Jack and the Beanstalk and we all got into the spirit of the pantomime, shouting out and singing along. The term finished with a party and we all enjoyed sausage and chips and Lin's lovely cakes.

This term we will be doing lots of activities for our creative badge and weather permitting we are hoping to do a hikes away badge.

Last year during our animal friend's badge the Beavers did an animal quiz and some of the answers where rather amusing. Here are some that made us smile.



Q What are elephants tusks made of?

A Hard Stuff. Stones

Q What animals other than cows can you get milk from?

A Bulls

Q Name a flightless bird

A A flamingo

Q What is the collective name for mice, rats, hamsters and gerbils?

A Rabbits

Q What is a baby swan called?

A A duck

Q What do camels use their humps for?

A To hold people on their backs.



**Helen Welch
Beaver Leader**

Hall Happenings

Tuesday	Beaver Scouts Ladies Guild (Third in the Month) Explorer Scouts
Wednesday	Cub Scouts
Thursday	Scouts 1st Abbots Langley Brownies
Friday	Fellowship (First in the Month)

Our scout website is progressing well.
Have a look at it to see more photos and articles
www.abbotslangleyscouts.org.uk

Woodsmoke Editor

Pauline Styles



1st Abbots Langley (3rd Watford North) Scout Group