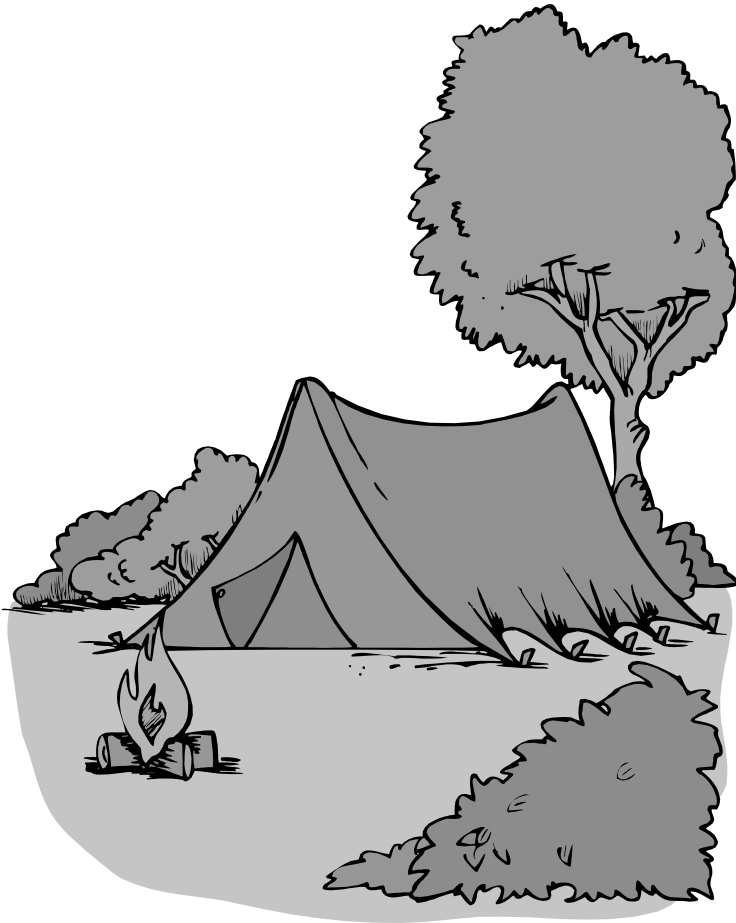


March 2005

Woodsmoke



Scout Troop News

Congratulations to -----

Dominic Benson on achieving his Outdoor Plus Challenge. A very difficult Challenge to obtain showing great dedication and commitment to scouting.

Jack Edwards, James Hood, Christopher Sheppard, George Styles and Fred Sugden on completing their Creative Challenge.

Well Done

Clive

Scouter in Charge's Bit

I would first like to congratulate Liam Goodman, one of our Beavers, for achieving the Bronze Chief Scouts Award. This is the first to be awarded to a Beaver in our Group since it's inception two years ago so let's hope there are many more. I also wish to congratulate Daniel Lowrie on his commitment and hard work resulting in the presentation of the Silver Chief Scouts Award. A great achievement.

Last term was a great fundraiser for the Group with the Autumn Jumble Sale and Christmas Market proving very successful by adding £2,500 to the coffers. Well done to Lin and the 'Jumble Sale Gang' for their tremendous efforts and to the many parents that helped out. These funds will be put towards the redecoration of the main hall that has not been done since the HQ was built 25 years ago. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of these fundraising events and the help needed from parents to make them the success they are.

Last term we also had the Remembrance Day Parade and the Christingle. There was a great turnout to both by all sections, but especially from the Scouts (something to do with a prize of a narrowboat weekend holiday). A total of £208 was raised for the Children's Society from the Christingle candles. Well done.



Clive Winder

Scouter in Charge

Green Beret 21st Anniversary

Tolmers Camp - November 2004

Last November twelve scouts from 1st Abbots Langley represented the group at the 21st Anniversary of the Green Beret held at Tolmers Wood.

Our first job was to pack the trailer and minibus. We then left Abbots Langley for Tolmers Wood. When we arrived we had the difficult task of putting up the tents in the dark with approximately one torch per tent! With our leaders "leading" we managed this in record time - about two hours!! That night we all slept well despite the cold and snow. (Note for future reference - pack two sleeping bags).

Saturday morning we got up bright and early to a cooked breakfast - many thanks to the organisers of the camp for their excellent food.

After breakfast it was time for day bases which involved various puzzles and challenges such as climbing over a van and trying to get from one side of a field to the other using barrels and wood. We probably could have done better at the challenges if it wasn't for falling over laughing when one of us got stuck or helped everyone over something and then realised he couldn't then get over himself. We also did an obstacle course which was very tough and tiring - but we succeeded. We had great fun orienteering as we managed to get lost not just once but twice.

When night fell it was time for - you've guessed it - night bases! These involved rifle shooting which is probably one of my favourite activities and making hot drinks which is always nice in cold conditions.

That night we were so exhausted we didn't notice the cold. Sunday morning we all slept in and then had presentation of awards around the flagpole. It was then time to pack up the tents - easier than putting them up - also easier as it was daylight!

Many thanks to Clive, Phil, Tony and Mike for taking us and helping us out. The Green Beret weekends are great fun with brilliant challenges and obstacles and I'd recommend them to all scouts.



Jack Edwards

Some of you may remember collecting money in a Smartie tube to help Jonathan Easter fund his gap year with Outward Bound Hong Kong. He would like to thank everybody who helped him in reaching his fundraising total. The charity specialises in outdoor experiential education and its aim is to enhance personal development through a range of adventurous land and sea-based activities. Volunteers undertake a wide range of tasks during their year and need to be prepared to throw themselves into all activities. Sanding boats, taking weather reports, checking equipment, organising the assault course are typical tasks and as volunteers prove their worth during the year they may be assigned greater responsibility as instructors on children's courses. The pictures are of these activities.

A few words from Jonny ...

On 23rd of January I was lucky enough to be put on a corporate course in Hainan, training the staff of the Marriott hotels from all over the world. Here we trained the guys in teamwork skills, and problem solving. It was an incredibly rewarding course and a huge amount of change could be seen.

After the course I have 5 days holiday which I took in Hainan, which just so happens to be known as the Hawaii of China. I did my research and told Richarch, a really cool instructor, who is a world renowned cave explorer, that there were caves on the island. So we teamed up together to go on an expedition to explore these and trek out to try and discover and chart unknown caves, and record their location.



We travelled around the south of the island, and hitch hiked out to an outcrop of limestone. it was unbelievably easy, and cool to get around. We took many different vehicles such as tractors, lorries, trucks, motorbike side cars, took tooks. We met so many different

people, and with limited Mandarin it was great fun trying to communicate with them.

We discovered many cave entrances, but they didn't lead very far, only a few meters. But we did find the entrance to a cave only known to the locals, called Luobidong, meaning, cave of dropping pens. We squeezed through the cave entrance, along a passage to a vast chamber with lots of very cool structures. After we explored the first chamber the only way of progressing further into the cave was to wade chest deep through an underground lake, along a thin ridge of harder rock which dropped to who knows how deep at either side. From there we discovered 3 more chambers, one was a bat nesting area, which I climbed up to, the smell of ammonia from the guano was pretty strong. As I poked my head through the small passage where I could hear the high pitched chirp of the bats inside, my foot dislodged some loose rock, which sent out vibrations which disturbed the bats, this sent a torrent of bats flying out, quickly ducking down out the flow. It was the most bizarre feeling as I could feel hundreds of bats flying a couple of centimetres above my head, and I could see them flying around in the torchlight of my caving helmet. It was incredible.

There were many weird and wonderful creatures down the cave, being in the tropics, it had its fair share of snakes and scorpions, and you had to be careful where to put your hands. I almost wet myself laughing as Rich leapt back and screamed like a girl, when we ran into a HUGE cave centipede, its body must have been 20cm long, but its legs were huge, and numerous, making its total length to about 1 foot and a half. Its was amazing!

After getting very disoriented down the cave, we discovered three more chambers, but no other entrances to this system. But it was something that I will never forget. After this we went through the centre of the island, and walked through the most amazing scenery. We stumbled into this house made from wood, and



DIARY DATES

March

4th	Ghost Walk in London	Fellowship
14th	Meeting	Executive Committee
15th	Talk on the Wartime RAF	Ladies Guild

April

1st	TBC	Fellowship
17th	St George's Day Parade	ALL
19th	Quiz	Ladies Guild
20th/23rd	Double Jumble Sale	ALL
23rd	Triathlon	Scouts

May			
6th-8th	Top 10 Scouts Canal Trip	Scouts	
6th	TBC	Fellowship	
13th	Scout Group AGM	ALL	
16th	Meeting	Executive Committee	
17th	Talk of Worldwide Canals Mr & Mrs Manning	Ladies Guild	
June			
3rd	TBC	Fellowship	
11th	Abbots Langley Carnival	ALL	

with a roof of straw. There were many ducks and chickens running around, a couple of pigs enclosed by palm trees. We wandered on and met this old man by the side of a paddy field, making baskets for the workers in the paddy fields. The guy was amazing and I bought one of the baskets as a memento. We then explored further to try and find the local maio tribe. We were successful and met more incredible people.

Hainan is a beautiful island, covered in lush tropical greenery with paddy fields and coconut plantations dotted around. It was the most amazing country to travel through. When we reached the north of the island, we looked round the capital city of Haikou, which was a great contrast to the countryside in the interior. We explored the backstreets and stumbled across a vast market, dealing in all foods including live cats, dogs, rabbits, ducks, pigeons, doves, turtles, dried fish, dried snakes and when we approached the live snakes the woman covered them up, and hand gestured us to go away. It was truly an eye opener!

We took the overnight sleeper bus back to Shenzhen, then across the border to Hong Kong. The sleeper bus, contained about 25 fairly unpleasant beds, and the journey took 16hrs. We stopped of at a dodgy road side cafe, and we were given a plate of meat with cold rice, and vegetables slapped on. Only when i was halfway through did i then

wonder what the meat was, and I'm pretty sure now that it was dog. I didn't feel like eating the rest of it after that.

Travelling in china was truly an eye opener. It made me realise, how different Hong Kong was from the rest of China. And how lucky we are to have opportunities that we do, as the majority of the people I met could never even think about doing what I'm doing. But it was their simple way of life, and their kindness which made the experience all that more powerful.



Jonathan Easter



ANYONE FOR CUBS...?



We began our Autumn meetings in September with an impressively skilful game of rounders at the park. For those who had over indulged on ice creams and barbeques during the summer, this was their chance to burn it off! The boys were ruthless in their treatment of the more... 'mature' members of our party - consequently there were many aching muscles the following day. It was good to see the boys after the holidays and set us up nicely for the coming term.

September saw the arrival of three new cubs - Thomas, Dhiren and Finnlay, with Jonathan arriving later in the term. Each of them has settled easily and is proving to be an asset to the pack. There are 29 boys in Cubs at present and we are proud to report that their attendance is generally excellent and they participate with enthusiasm. Thank you mums and dads for ensuring the boys arrive punctually and smartly!

A good deal of time and effort is put into planning and presenting evenings that will, hopefully, be enjoyable for the boys. We aim to have a varied programme that includes badge work, physical activities, craft sessions, mental challenges, teamwork and something to do with our local community. So we have had a quiz night, map reading work, a mini Olympics and a paper aeroplane challenge (if ever you need a long distance paper plane just get in touch with Perry!) This term 28 of the boys achieved either their Home or Personal Safety



Badge and 26 of them will be awarded the Caring Challenge Award early next term. Well done to all of you!



The Caring Challenge gave us a big focus last term as it involved firstly, a visit to the Police Station in **Shady Lane**, Watford; making a selection of Christmas crafts and finally, raising funds for charity at our Christmas Fayre. The police trip was excellent and we were given a most informative tour of the station by a number of very friendly Police Officers. We all agreed that the cells were awful (a good lesson learnt).

Our Christmas Fayre was certainly a highlight of the term and the boys were really excited at the prospect of selling their wares to their parents! We began the evening by joining the carol concert up in the village which helped to put some Christmas spirit into everyone. Back at HQ the buying and selling got started and families were able to have a chat over a cup of tea and some very tasty cakes (clever Jo!). The best part of the evening was discovering that £100 had been raised! The boys voted on the suggested charities and agreed on Children in Need. **THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH** for your generosity.

We finished off the term with a trip to Hollywood Bowls followed by a fish and chip supper. Lots of fun was had by all. We have said goodbye to two of our Cubs - Daniel who moves up to Scouts and Brima who, unfortunately for us, has sporting commitments to fulfil. Both have been great Cubs (particularly good at washing up in case mums don't already know) and we wish them both well.

So, once again, we have had a very busy term and hopefully, the boys have all enjoyed themselves. And of course, we couldn't do it without help from parents.....thanks very much.

Gerry (Cub Leader), Chris (ACL), Jo and Aisling

Dear PCSO Hayes

Thank you for letting us come to the police station. I had a really nice time. My favourite bit was seeing the weapons because they were interesting; I thought all policeman had guns, but now I know that they don't.

The dogs were interesting. When I went on holiday I saw a dog at the airport which looked just like the one that you had. Has your dog ever worked at Heathrow Airport?

Until I went to the police station, I thought that the cells were made of bars not rooms with doors and I was surprised that the prisoners got treated so well.

I did not realise that the police cars had so many different sirens. I gave me a massive fright when one of the sirens went off!

Thank you for the pen, pencil, rubber, ball and fingerprint sheet. Thank you for spending time with us, I really learnt a lot.

Yours sincerely

Daniel

Dear PCSO Hayes,

Daniel
Sixer, Blue Six
1st Abbots Langley Cub Pack

Thank you very much for showing the 1st Abbots Langley Cub Group round your station. I really enjoyed seeing the police dogs and I enjoyed being locked in the cell but I wouldn't want to be locked up for real. I also enjoyed going in the police car especially when the sirens were flashing and making a noise.

Thank you again.

From, Andrew





May I introduce you to Snaggle, the new Cub Scout mascot. Here he is making his Promise.

And not to forget his friend the new Beaver Scout mascot.



* * *Don't Forget* * *



*The double jumble sales will be on
20th and 23rd April 2005*

Hall Happenings

Monday	3rd Abbots Langley Brownies
Tuesday	Beaver Scouts Ladies Guild (Third in the Month)
Wednesday	Cub Scouts Explorer Scouts
Thursday	1st Abbots Langley Brownies Scouts
Friday	Girl Guides Fellowship (First in the Month)

*I hope you have all enjoyed reading this issue of
the new colour Woodsmoke!*

Pauline

Woodsmoke Editor

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