



# Happy New Year

Welcome back. I hope everyone has had a Happy Christmas and a restful break. This year promises to be as active and enjoyable as previous years. Our family at Elphwood has grown over the past year to become one of the largest scout groups in Essex. Many of you who have been worrying about those extra pounds you have put on over the festive season, will be glad to know that another work day is due soon. Our scout building requires a few repairs and a lick of paint, and the grounds which everyone uses throughout the year needs a general tidy up. Without your voluntary help, we would have to sub-contract the work out, meaning your child's subscriptions would have to increase. Again, the district has put together a nice selection of activities and competitions for your children to take part in, and we hope that they will find them enjoyable. It takes up a great deal of time and groundwork to put the forthcoming programme together, so please spare a thought for the volunteers.

### Ian Bailey

The 10th of December was Ian Bailey's official last day as Simba Cub Leader. Ian has over 22 years of loyal service to our group. To show our appreciation for all his hard work over the years, a special ceremony, come social gathering was arranged at Elphwood after his last cub pack meeting. In attendance was many of his friends and colleagues who he has worked with over the years. Many came along to wish him a Happy retirement (and some tried to entice him back). A presentation was made by Ken Stanger, our Group Scout Leader and Gill Smith, the Cub Scout section's Assistant District Commissioner. It's always very sad to see anyone leave our little 'family' at Elphwood, Ian will not be forgotten and will always be very welcome at Elphwood, whenever he is passing by. We wish him the very best for the future and would like to put our hands together and applaud him.



### Cavalcade of Lights 30th November

Well ..... What can I say, the evening was a little damp. Bemore's, our local builders merchant in Waltham Abbey, provided us with an opened back truck and a driver for the evening. A big thank you to them for their help. In true scouting form, we managed to rig up some very dodgy lighting and with the help of a couple of groundsheets, some rope, cable ties and a reef knot here and there, a temporary shelter was erected. Once again, the scouts put in the effort and created some wonderful costumes. Despite the rain and getting completely soaked to the skin, the parade was very enjoyable and successful. The event always attracts a huge crowd of people, and our scout group attracted loads of cheers. Well done to everybody who took part.



## The Bulls and the Vultures

Last January, the Friday troop's membership had soared to over 40. With the Explorers sharing the meeting, it was hard work. Last April, a new troop began meeting on a Wednesday evening. Some scouts stayed on at the Friday meeting and some found that Wednesday night was more convenient to them. The Explorers eventually took over the old scout hall in Upshire., and now run their meetings away from Elphwood. The reduction in numbers made an overnight difference, which changed the Friday scout meetings from chaotic to manageable. Both troops form one large 'Scout Troop' for joint activities and camping. As both troops are required to fund themselves individually, one of the significant changes that had to be made to identify them as individuals, was acquiring troop names. Over the past months, both troops have acquired themselves mascots. Friday's brought a cuddly Vulture on a visit to a Vulture Sanctuary whilst on summer camp last August Whilst the Wednesday troop found a rather 'cute' looking Bull, that was surplus to the teddy collection in the group garage. Both mascots were invested into the scout movement by their leaders and form the individual troop names. The Friday Vultures with Elphwood as their mascot, and the Wednesday Bulls with their mascot simply called 'Moo'.



Laura and Louise reciting Moo's Scout Law and Promise

## Wednesday Troop Bag Packing 12th October

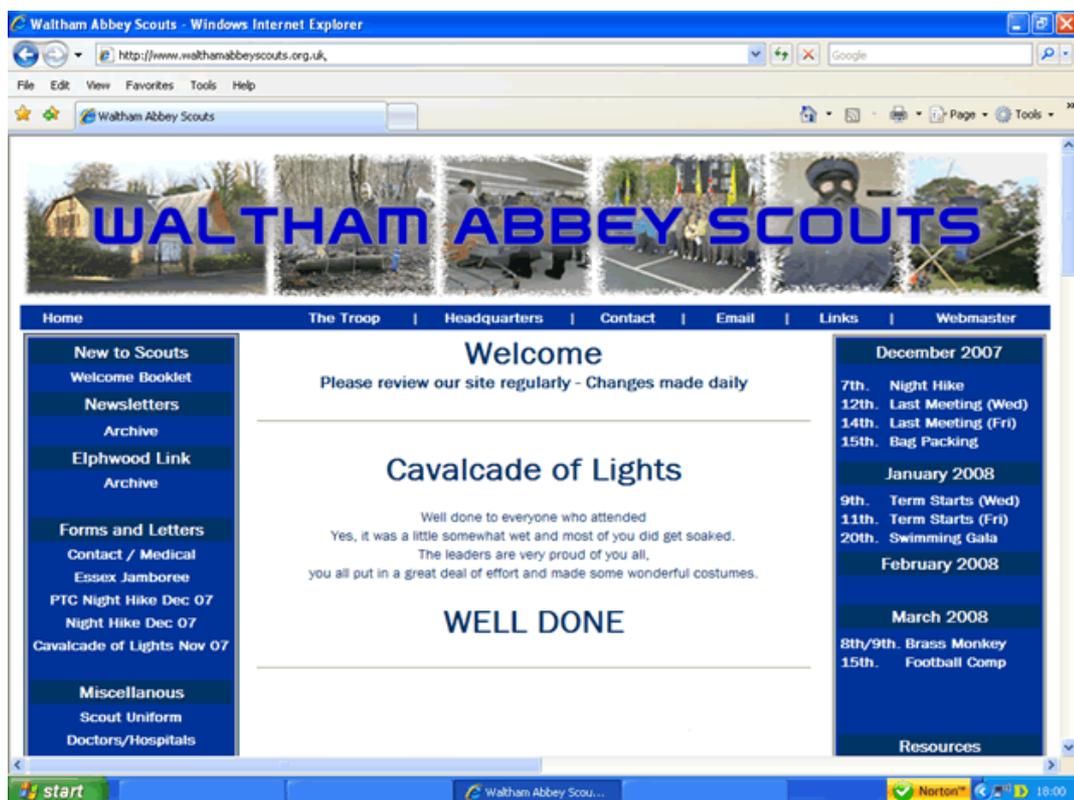
Without any funds, the Wednesday troop embarked on their first fund raising exercise, bag packing at Sainsbury's in Loughton. We arrived at 6.30pm to a near empty store, expecting it to get busier. In fact the evening didn't get any better, and to make matters worst 90% of the troop turned up, so many of the checkouts had too many bag packers. The guys did ever so well to keep alert throughout our 2½ hour stay. At one point it was extremely boring for them, standing around not doing much, but the result was tremendous as we raised over £350. We held a competition to see who could collect the most, and the winner collected over £50. The prize was a Millets Gift Voucher. All scouts who took part are credited with money off their camp budget. In all they all benefited from the evening as well as supporting their troop gain the much needed funds. Well done!



## Scout Website

In this era, it is very common for Scout Groups across the country to have an internet web presence. The Wednesday troop now has its very own website. Like other troops, its purpose is to keep its members (and the parents) regularly informed with the latest news and forthcoming events. It is also a useful way to store those hand outs and forms that are lost or mislaid, which can now be conveniently downloaded at home saving time and hassle. The site is not buzzing with activity and graphics that jump out at you. You won't find it has an 'Award Winning' structure to it, pop ups and adverts that drive you crazy. Its purely a basic design and with a purpose. Apart of from the usual information you would expect to see, you will find a calendar of forthcoming events, archived editions of this publication the 'Elphwood Link', and a handy resources section that is not only useful to the troop, but can also be used by other sections. The site is public, this means that you will not be committed to signing up, enabling you and the general public to access all pages, therefore the content is limited. The trial, which has been running since October last year, has proved worthwhile and is regularly visited. The site is update on a regular basis, therefore it is worth returning every other day.

The troop website can be found at —  
[www.walthamabbeyscouts.org.uk](http://www.walthamabbeyscouts.org.uk)



## Expedition Challenge

Last September, two patrols one from each troop, took part in a weekend of hiking and camping, part of the requirements for their Expedition Challenge badge. The challenge started with a hike from the Old English Gentleman pub to a campsite in Dobb's Weir, with only a grid map reference and compass to guide them. Each scout carried their own kit. In-case they did get lost, they were given a sealed envelope with the campsite marked clearly on a map. As we expected, both patrols didn't feel it necessary to open it. Once they arrived at their overnight destination, they had to pitch their patrol tent and help pitch a dining shelter. Another part of their challenge was to cook their own meals, not just for their patrol but for their leader too. Maureen had laid on water activities for the guys at the nearby Enfield Sailing Club, so after the tents were up, both troops hiked a mile to spend a few hours Sailing. After breakfast and breaking camp, the guys hiked back to ESC where Maureen had arranged a morning of Kayaking on the lake. At 1pm, both troops hiked back to Elphwood with their kit, where the challenge weekend finished. They all did extremely well, the weekend was challenging and required experience. The leaders are hoping to arrange another Expedition Challenge weekend later in year.



## Quartermaster's Corner

### Night Hike

Both troops met at the usual haunt, the now falling apart Old English Gentlemen disused public house. The troops were split into four smaller patrols, two heading in one direction and the others in the opposite direction. The 5 mile hike went well with no injuries. The weather was on our side for a change with remaining just very cold. First team back actually cut their hike short (sounds like it was planned) and without keys to Elphwood, had to wait in the cold for the 'Winners' to return. Once all back at the hut, Hot drinks and Hot Dogs were served. To the remaining scouts who stayed, there were games before lights out at 11.30pm. The guys who stayed overnight were very well behaved. I did hear from the Grapevine that there were plans in force to test out the leaders patience, but it seems they 'bottled' it. After a breakfast of cereal and bacon sandwiches, kicking out commenced at 10am.

Verdict: 10/10 Well done guys

### Christmas Bag Packing

Morrison's in Loughton invited the scouts into their store on the 15th of December, to help their customers pack their bags. The all day event raised £900. Scouts from both troops took part, some staying 2 hours and some staying the whole day from 10am until 5pm. Every scout who took part will be awarded with £30 towards the forthcoming Essex Jamboree in August or another camp/sleepover they choose to take part in. Well done to everyone who came along.



### My Last Issue



Sorry folks! This will be the last issue of the Elphwood Link that is published by me. I have enjoyed writing the quarterly newsletters over the past year. As the Promise says 'Do your best' and I feel I have. As a sufferer of Dyslexia, I am proud of my achievement. Those of you out there with similar disabilities, I encourage you to 'have a go'. My disability is mild, others are less unfortunate.

#### Dyslexia

Impaired ability to understand written language. . a learning disorder marked by a severe difficulty in recognizing and understanding written language, leading to spelling and writing problems. It is not caused by low intelligence or brain damage.