

## 21<sup>st</sup> St. Helens (Newton le Willows) Scout Group

2008 has been a very busy year for our group. All sections have continued to grow and we now have around 80 young members with ages ranging from 5¾ through to 15 years.



Our youngest section members, the beavers, have learned about people from other countries and cultures, enjoying several food taster sessions. They have also learned how to be healthy through eating healthy foods and taking regular exercise. The colony enjoyed an Olympic themed summer fun day and a day trip to Gulliver's World. They have also helped to raise money for Marie Curie, while at the same time learning about daffodil bulbs.



The middle section is the cubs and they range in age from 8 to 10½ years. Their meetings are always lively with lots of fun team games being played, helping them to learn how to play fair. The pack enjoyed their annual bonfire night party with fireworks. Cubs also got fitter by completing their athlete badge. The annual district cub camp was very popular and of course the theme was the Olympics with some alternative water sports, just in case they were not wet enough from the rain!



The scout troop have learnt about photography and DIY. They also held a cooking-on-a-budget competition between the patrols. Thankfully, all leaders have now recovered! Of course the real fun of scouting is getting outdoors and this year was no exception with the scouts taking part in cycling, walking and climbing. As always, the District chariot race in October was a must for most in the troop; three teams completed the course and some still have the bruises to prove it!

Several times each year, all sections meet. Many overcame stiff muscles and blisters to raise money for the scout hut refurbishment to complete a sponsored walk from Newton to Billinge. They also enjoyed a party in the summer with lots of games, dancing and sausage rolls. Each section provided entertainment at Christmas during the fund-raising social evening.

Scouting is enjoyed at many levels, either within the individual sections right through to internationally. Our beavers, cub and scouts have taken part in annual St. Helens District events including the swimming gala, cross country and cyclocross. All these events combine having fun, learning new skills, meeting new people and making friends for life. Another annual event enjoyed by many from the group is the Gang Show at the Theatre Royal in St. Helens. Many hours of hard work is put into learning new songs, dances, sketches and making costumes. All are exhilarated by their performances at such a large venue. Some of the scouts then went on to perform in SIAD08 (Show In A Day) in Crewe which is open to all North West Gang Show members over 11 years old.

Part of being a uniformed organisation is recognising the past and the sacrifices people have made for us. For this reason, it is always a privilege to parade at St. Peter's monthly family services, Earlestown's Remembrance Day service and the St. George's Day parade in St. Helens.

During 2009, the group will celebrate 80 years of there being a scout hut on the Birley Street site and hope that we will be able to bring together scouts, past and present, to share their experiences.