

The Water Rat

Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

October 2001

Skipper's Scrawl

Although it's only a few weeks since the holiday break it seems that so much has already been packed into the programme. Firstly well done to everyone on their performance at the RN inspection. We had a very good report and both Inspecting Officers were impressed, especially since it was the Troop's first night back after the holiday. It was also good to see the Venture Scouts out in force and sailing one of the gigs.

All three gigs did well in the Great river race with record times this year. Unfortunately the Parents crew did not manage to beat the Rotary crew so perhaps a little more practice next year. Is it true the pub they rowed to on training evenings was really Boaters and not one at Hampton Court? The seniors did very well reaching the finish before all the Warspite crews including their under 18s so what a shame they had been unable to be at the Regatta due to doing D of E awards that weekend. We may have won the junior as well as the Venture trophies. Congratulations also to our junior Crew who came second in the under-14 class.

Completing an excellent month of achievements our senior team won the national RN Groups Football competition at Portsmouth and came back sporting a very large cup. Well done to everyone.

Borrowed & not returned?

We seem to be short of about six junior buoyancy aids. Could the person responsible please return them to Robin or Karen as soon as possible since otherwise, as now the troop is up to 35, we may not be able to get everyone afloat.

As winter approaches we need to consider boat and HQ Maintenance. I will be calling for volunteers shortly to help with some painting and DIY work.

Finally a reminder to everyone that subs are due. If you haven't done so already please send in your cheques now rather than waiting for Ros to chase you!

Keith

Dates for your Diary



- October 28 – HQ Working Party (*Freeman, Ford, Foster, Goodall)
- November 1/2 – District Night Hike
- November 10 – County Swimming Gala
- November 11 – HQ Working Party (*Harrison, Hazard, Healy)
- November 17/18 – District Scout Night Hike
- November 19 – Executive meeting 8pm
- November 25 – HQ Working Party (*Kearns, King, Lafon)
- December 2 – County Orienteering Competition
- December 9 – HQ Working Party (*Lightfoot, Livesey, Manson, McGuiness)
- December 15 – *Water Rat* copy date

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

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Beavers - A wet'n'windy start to Autumn

It's all change in Beavers, as we welcome a new leader in Maggie Bailey, who brings a lot of enthusiasm, ideas and experience to the group. We also welcome four new Beavers: Nina Byrd, Harrison Parker, George and Jack Taylor, who replace those who have moved up to Cubs this year.

In deference to the weather, which has closed-in dramatically since August, we have planned a programme of indoor activities for the weeks up to Christmas. There has been a Football Quiz already, organised by Keith, and this will be followed with another indoor sports night, dubbed "It's A Knock-out".

One of the highlights is sure to be the Civil War Enactment night on 29th October, where the hut will be visited by soldiers of Oliver Cromwell's army, who will tell us about England's history in the Seventeenth century.

Swimming is also featured, with three visits to the Teddington Pool in Vicarage Road. At the first, both Charlotte Pearce and Zoe D'Souza were successful in gaining their Level One badges. These were presented, along with the scarves and badges for the four new Beavers, by the Skipper at the Investiture.

We will close the year with Christmas Crafts-making, and our Party on 17th December, so there's lots to look forward to!

Tony, Keith and Maggie.

RN Recognised Units Soccer Sixes

At the end of September, two teams, the juniors under Karen's management and the seniors, under Jonny Burr's management, took part in this prestigious event at HMS Excellent, Portsmouth. Staying on HMS Bristol, a type 48 destroyer, they were ready for a weekend of tough competition. The juniors played well, but were not quite as strong as some of the other teams. The seniors however, drew one game, won every other game and won the under-16 competition. Brilliantly done, they returned with a shield for each player and a very large winners' cup, now on display in the wardroom.



District Swimming Gala

A very good gala took place at the Malden Centre on Saturday, 13th October. With a large number of scout teams entered from the whole district, there was some excellent swimming and really close events. There were more parents there supporting than there have been for some years, which is very good indeed. Leander's teams pulled the stops out, performed exceedingly well and we won the event.



Coxswain's Corner

A lot has happened since the last *Water Rat* in July, particularly as this Autumn has been one of the busiest for some years. The Troop is now absolutely full, 35 scouts, with a large group of very enthusiastic Cubs having come up this September. A warm welcome to Benjamin Cockle, Joseph Farrell, Daniel D'Souza, Jonathan Manson and Cormac Healey.

Apart from the large number of events which we have taken part in and which are reported here, for the first time, we have a team entered in the National Scout Air Rifle Competition at Walton Firs and have the District Night Hike and County Swimming Gala in November. Karen will also be taking a wardening party to Polyapes Camp site whilst I am at the Air Rifle event.

As the nights are now drawing in, could I ask parents to ensure that if their sons or daughters are cycling to Leander, to please ensure that the cycles have *working* front and rear lights.



At Troop meetings we now concentrate on seamanship and badgework skills, special events, plus (of course) a good variety of games. We do have a number of Saturday meetings and could I ask that all Scouts make the effort to come down at some time when

we are working on boats and equipment. Unless they are properly maintained and looked after, they cannot be used when boating starts again.

The rest of the term's programme is very full and will finish with silly games and team challenges at the traditional Christmas Party,

Coxswain

P.S. I had hoped to have articles from scouts who have attended events, but new schools and homework seem to have been rather demanding – hopefully we can have them in the next *Water Rat*.

Cubs in County Gala

Since the last issue we have had a lot of movement in the pack, five boys have moved on to Scouts and we have welcomed nine new members. We have had people transfer to us and boys come up from Beavers and also off the waiting list.

We have had the District swimming Gala this term held on the 13th October at New Malden. We had a good team represent us – they were as follows: Jake Mellett, Alex Coniff, Charles Kimber, Alex Barley, Andrew Chappell, Oliver Biddulph, Nick Patterson, Sam Aldred, Ben Brook, Alex Kersey.

The 4x1 length freestyle relay team won the final and will be invited to represent the County in the Gala on the 3rd November. That is Charles Kimber, Alex Barley, Jake Mellett and Nick Patterson. Well done to all who took part.

As you know, we had the Admiralty Inspection in September and the boys who helped on that day did a great job and represented the Pack very well and we had a good mention in the final report. Map reading was our activity and this seemed to go down very well and all the boys knew the elements required.

This term we are working on the Community Badge and getting the boys to have knowledge of the things needed in an emergency. Please get them to learn the home telephone



number and their address as this is very important. We hope to be going to the Police Station in Kingston to finish off the badge just before Christmas.

Just to finish with a reminder that on the next meeting, the 31st October, we are having a Halloween party, so all boys can come dressed up and we will be apple-bobbing and getting wet and messy.

Akela (Tim)

Very Good Results in Annual 'Admiralty Inspection'



Coxswain & Karen report:

It was very rewarding to see virtually the whole Troop at inspection, considering the date selected was the first day of school term for many and contacting people during the summer holiday was not easy. The Scouts were very well turned out and put on a very creditable display of skills and abilities. Considering we had both the outgoing Inspecting Officer and the new incoming Inspecting Officer attending, this was a rather special inspection. The Inspecting Officer's report says it all. Our thanks and congratulations to all who took part.

The following is the official report of the inspection:

I am pleased to tell you that as a result of an inspection carried out on 4 September 2001, Ministry of Defence recognition of the Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group has been renewed for a further period.

GROUP STRENGTH –

Venture Scouts: 7, Scouts: 30, Cubs: 25, Beavers: 18.

ASSESSMENT – General Appearance: Very Good, Dress: Very Good, Knowledge: Good, Drill: Good, Bearing: Very Good, Badge Work: Very Good.

This was an outdoor inspection, which took place on the Thames adjacent to the Group's Headquarters in Lower Ham Road, Kingston. It was attended by the Assistant County Commissioner, District Commissioner, County Water Activities Advisor, Group Chairman and Treasurer.

The evening's programme started at 1830 with the two Inspecting Officers (both the incoming and outgoing Staff Officer Scouts) being rowed in two Gigs from Kingston Bridge to the HQ some 10 minutes downstream. The Gig crew were very well turned out, their drill was polished and the two

coxswains were very competent. The inspecting Officers were piped ashore to meet the Group Scout Leader, Chairman and Area Scout Leaders. The inspection continued with a tour of the well equipped boathouse and well designed Headquarter facilities followed by the ceremony of Colours. The standard of piping was high and the drill good.

While the scouts prepared for water activities the inspecting Officers met the Cub Leader and two of his three assistants and the newly promoted sixers and seconds from the Cub Pack plus one solitary Beaver (her Dad was the CSL!). All the cubs were enthusiastic and spoke up well. After this meeting the Cubs broke into groups for map reading instruction on the use of grid references dealt with very thoroughly and with a good practical element.



This was the first meeting after the summer holiday and the date had been rearranged at comparatively short notice, to facilitate the Staff Officer Scouts handover. Despite this complication an impressive number of scouts were afloat in two gigs, one Home Counties gig under sail, four dinghies and eight kayaks. The inspecting Officers were rowed very





competently by a senior venture scout to witness close up the waterborne drills. The gigs were exercised in man overboard drills after removing their rudders and demonstrated good command and control, correct terminology, competent oarsmanship and executed satisfactory recoveries. Instruction was also taking place in anchoring and coxing. The Gigs were kept busy in an exciting game water polo. The Gig under sail was an inspiring sight well crewed by the Venture scouts. All points of sail were demonstrated and again a man overboard was competently recovered.



At the formal inspection both the Venture Scouts and the Scouts wore smartly turned out and responded enthusiastically to questions. Badge work

achievements demonstrate a high level of activity and organisation. It is again recommended that Emergency Aid receives more emphasis and the high level of sailing activity should produce more helmsmen. The inspection concluded with a crisply conducted Sunset ceremony with good piping.

The group is full, with healthy waiting lists and is managed by an ideal array of Leaders. Group management and financial provision appear to be in good order. A copy of the well planned programme was presented for the year.

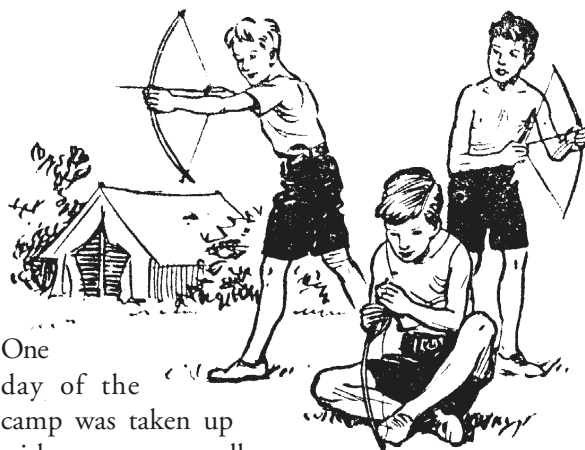
An excellent benchmark inspection for the new SOSC of an enthusiastic, efficiently run and well supported Group. Now recognised by the Admiralty for 60 years, the Group is in pole position to continue its good work. The Group is thanked for accommodating the short notice change to its inspection date.

RC Williams, Lieutenant Commander Royal Navy, for DNRes

Troop Summer Camp

Organising Summer Camp this year became somewhat of a nightmare with foot and mouth outbreaks causing the cancellation of our first choice, the Welsh Jamboree in Brecon, and then the next, in Yorkshire, was also cancelled for the same reason. Eventually 17 scouts, 2 ventures and 2 leaders arrived for a week packed full of activities at Tolmers Scout Camp and Activity Site, in Hertfordshire. "Come to Tolmers" is held over two weeks every year, with both guides and scouts from all over the country attending.

Seeing the faces of the scouts, as they set up camp, surrounded by guides, was very revealing. "Oh no, not guides," they groaned. Within 24 hours, that had all changed, as the girls were now 'cool'! With over 1300 attending the camp, some 200 leaders and a service crew of about 40, this was a camp with a difference. Each day, the scouts could do four activities, with over 40 different choices, such as sailing and windsurfing to climbing, ten pin bowling, quad bikes and laser clay shooting.



One day of the camp was taken up with a vast, very well organised 10 mile incident hike around the surrounding countryside. It was red hot, with temperatures in the 90s, but with water available at every control, the heat was not a problem.

With plenty of evening activities, including a massive disco for the boys and girls and a blues band for the leaders, it was a very active week. Although the leaders were involved in marshalling and assisting with activities, there were opportunities, for the first time ever, at camp, to chill out and take it easy.

Everyone had a good time and as a nice bonus Leander won the Tolmers Six-a-side Football competition.

Coxswain

Great River Race

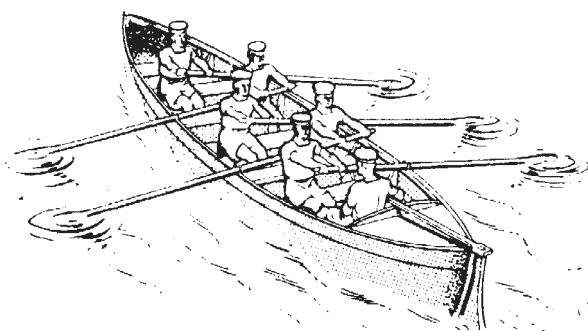
What a great day, good weather, good tidal stream and excellent times for all who took part. The juniors, as always, one of the youngest crews successfully completed the course. The Mutineers, who had been out regularly during the summer, shaved even more time off their previous year's good time and the senior gig crew even managed to beat another unit's very good venture scout crew on the finish line.



It really is a great event – anyone taking part will see the river as very few others do – and to be part of an armada of every other type of pulling craft imaginable, is a unique experience. Next year would be an ideal opportunity to put in another adult crew, perhaps a ladies crew or a mixed crew? If

you are interested let Ian Chapple or Coxswain know.

Guild Gig crew congratulated



Guild Chairman Ray Taylor congratulated their crew on coming second in their group, finishing in 3 hours 5 minutes 11 seconds. This was despite a clash of oars at the start and being rammed by a racing gig, a bit of a hairy moment, leading to some very unscoutlike language! The Rotary club crews were also thanked for their supply of champagne at the end.

The team this year included Ivor Hunt (first timer), John Sharp (old timer), Ray Taylor (leader), Dick Riches (head of finance), Flan (destined for greater things) and Paul L-C (sponsor).

Organiser of boat maintenance was Gordon Dodge, and both wooden gigs were looking immaculate, having each received some t.l.c. plus three coats of varnish.

Sunday Working Parties

Parents' working parties on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month are for regular cleaning and maintenance of the HQ, allowing our Leaders to get on with planning and running programmes.

All Leander families (except leaders) are divided into groups of four or five and one parent from each family is asked to come along from 10:00 to 12:00, arranging swaps if necessary. Please put your family's date in the diary now. If you are new to Leander, then your name will appear on the next rota, starting in March.

Please would the **first named* on the list arrange to collect a key from Mike Freeman (020 8549 8634).

October 28 – *Freeman, Ford, Foster, Goodall

November 11 – *Harrison, Hazard, Healy

November 25 – *Kearns, King, Lafon

December 9 – *Lightfoot, Livesey, Manson,
McGuinness

January 13 – *Mellett, Mitchell, Osborne, Paintin

January 27 – *Patterson, Pearn, Pilcher, Pratt,
Seeley

February 10 – *Sollis, Steele, Thomas, Walters,
Whitaker

February 24 – *Whitfield, Wingrove, Woods,
Yagnick, Young