

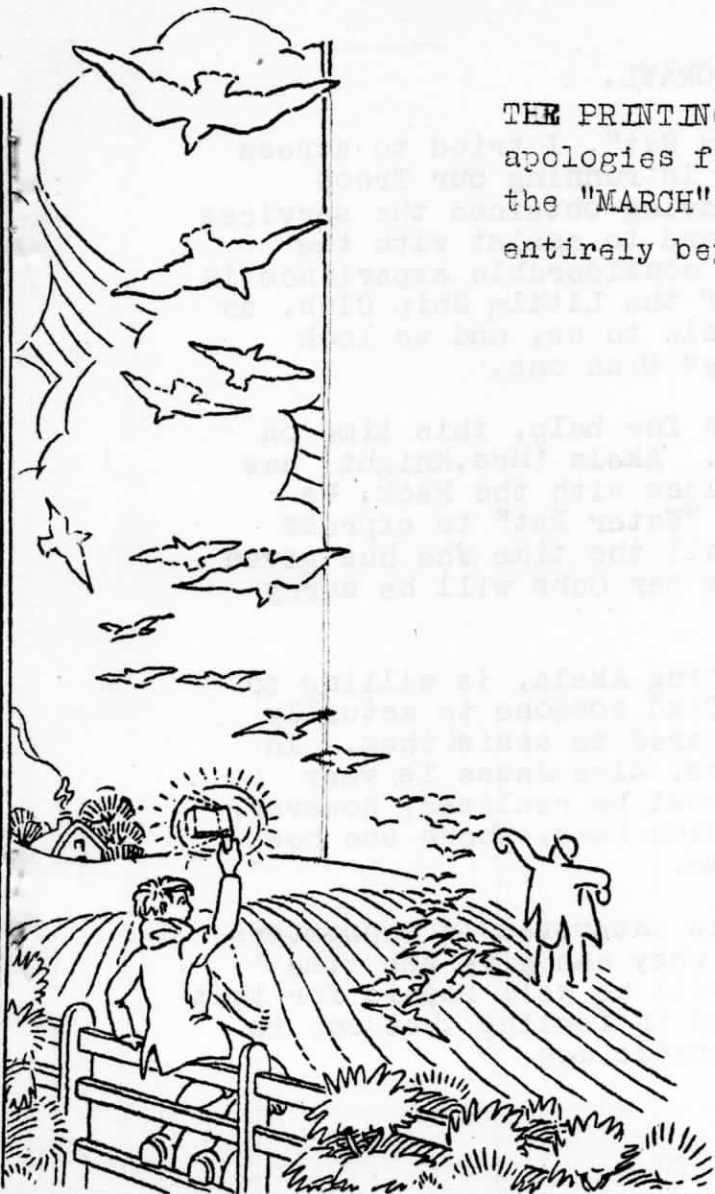
THE PRINTING DEPARTMENT offer their sincere apologies for the late appearance of this, the "MARCH" issue - due to circumstances entirely beyond their control.

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SKIPPER'S SCRAWL.

In the last issue of the "Water Rat", I tried to stress the very pressing need of more helpers in running our Troop meetings. We are very fortunate in having obtained the services of Mr. Desmond Elms, who has come forward to assist with the Senior Scout Troop. Mr. Elms has had considerable experience in small sailing craft, and is a member of the Little Ship Club, so his experience should prove very valuable to us, and we look forward to "smooth sailing" in more ways than one.

Now I have to appeal once again for help, this time on behalf of the Cub Section of the Group. Akela (Mrs. Knight) has asked me to find someone to take her place with the Pack. We should like, through the medium of the "Water Rat" to express our sincere thanks to Mrs. Knight for all the time she has given to the running of the Pack, and we know her Cubs will be sorry to lose her help.

Miss Jesse, who has been assisting Akela, is willing to carry on, but is very anxious that we find someone to actually "take over", and she will be quite prepared to assist them. In the meantime, until a new Akela is found, Miss Jesse is very kindly carrying on for the Group. It must be realised, however, that her first duty is to the 3rd Kingston Pack, where she has been Assistant Cubmaster for a long time.

Should YOU know of anyone who is intersted in youngsters of the ages of 8 to 12 years, and feel they can give the time required, Akela assures me that they will be well repaid for that time, by the enjoyment which is obtained in feeling that one is helping these boys at such an impressionable age.

AN EVENING WITH THE JUNIORS.

This being a winter number, we have no Camps to report, so, thinking that you would be interested to know what happened on a Club night at the Headquarters, without any warning, I dropped in on the Juniors one Tuesday evening.

Entering the Fo'c'sle, I came upon Derek Huckson with his brother Charles, and Michael Fletcher, all members of the Beaver Patrol, busy practising a "square lashing", and a neat and tidy job they were making of it. Leaving them, I ran into the Skipper, a bit under the weather with a heavy cold, but carrying on arranging programmes and notices. He told me that Michael Smart and Wally Shennan had recently passed the necessary tests for Second Class Badges. Good for you, Wally, and Michael. Hearing voices in the Galley, I found a group of Beavers, Seals, and Seagulls, Tony Bond was splicing a rope, whilst Colin Ford and Donald Frost were learning First Aid, and John Ford had Bob Sedgewick looking like a first-class hospital case. John said that he was instructing Bob in the use of the triangular bandage. Leaving them, and climbing up to the Chartroom, I saw the Seagulls, Michael Roberts, Michael Smart, and Peter Davies, under their Patrol Leader, Ian Finch, studying ensigns and flags. Then, with a blinding headlight, Ron Jault arrived on his motor bike, to take a P.T. Class, and A/S/M. Peter Burton, who was generally supervising the various activities, told the Troop to "Fall in" for the Skipper to read out orders, etc. When this parade was dismissed, Ron, complete in a white sweater and flannel trousers, looking a typical P.T. Instructor, got cracking. Starting with a game in which, at the orders "Man the Lifeboat", or "Boat Decks", the crew rushed from one end of the Clubroom to the other, whilst at the commands "Boat Chocks", or "Jibo" they lay flat on the deck. During this rather hectic game, Mike Smart managed to get in the way and was bowled over. A few minutes of this had the lads in a fine healthy sweat, and incidentally raised such a dust, they had to open the windows.

Having got his class warmed up, Ron called for the vaulting horse, and mats, which were quickly brought out and placed in position. Commencing with somersaults, Long dives, and Long jumps, during which Charlie Huckson showed very good form in the Long dive, they passed on to the side roll and backward roll, finishing with a forward and backward roll.

Peter Davies was very good in the Side Roll, but Donald Frost got into a mess with the Backward Roll, and had to be untangled by the Instructor.

It was now the turn of the vaulting horse, and many of the lads proved very lively and full of spring, but poor Donald was in trouble again, and had, finally, to climb over the horse. As these boys come from homes as far apart as Shannon Corner, New Malden; Ace of Spades, Hook; and Morden; and the time being nearly 9 o'clock, the Parade was dismissed. I came away with envy in my heart, and if it had been possible, would gladly have put the clock back a few years. Lucky lads!

* * * * *

An angry man dashed into the Editor's Office of a newspaper. "What do you mean by this?" he thundered, pointing to an obituary notice. "What about it?" asked the Editor. "Your beastly paper has announced my death!" "H'm", said the Editor. "I'm afraid we cannot contradict anything we have already published, but I'm willing to come to terms - without charging you, I will put you in the "Births" column, and give you a fresh start in life".

WHETHER THE WEATHER.

Weather has an all-important affect on our lives, and many sayings and superstitions regarding it have been passed down to us through the ages. The wind is the controlling factor as it carries the heat, cold, and rain to the different parts of the world, and so we get the following lines - "The South wind always bring bad weather. The North brings wet and cold. The West wind always brings us rain. The East wind sends it back again". The weight and density of the air measured by the barometer also tell what to expect, and Admiral Fitzroy's rule is "Barometer falls for warm, wet, or more wind: rises for cold, dry or less wind". It is also well to remember that "Long foretold, long last. Short notice, soon past".

The sailor looks chiefly to the sky for his forecast, and knows that "Mackerel sky and mare's tails, make lofty ships to carry low sails", and that "Mackerel sky, not long wet nor yet long dry". Then, of course, there is that wellknown rhyme "Red sky at night, shepherds delight. Red sky in the morning, shepherds warning", and "If the sun in red should set, the next day surely will be wet. If the sun should set in grey, the next will be a rainy day".

Also, in the sky certain conditions of the moon are said to foretell the coming weather. "Last night had a golden ring. Tonight no moon we see". When we see the dim image of the old moon continuing the circle of the new moon, the old moon is said to be in the new moons arms, and is the sign of rain and rough weather. "I saw the new moon yest're'en, Wi' the old moon in her arm; And if we gang to sea, master, I fear we'll come to harm". A mist travelling uphill from the shore is a hopeful sign "When the mist is from the hill, then good weather it doth spill (spoil). When the mist is from the sea, then good weather it will be".

A lot can be learned from observing the behaviour of the birds, animals, and flowers. Animals are always restless before a thunderstorm and the countryfolk say that if the Rooks fly low it means rain, if they feed busily and hurry about together, a storm is likely: if they sit on fences or dart down and wheel about, expect wind. Before stormy weather, the Seagull ventures inland; "Seagull, seagull, sit on the sand. Its never fine weather when you're on the land". In advance of rain it is said geese cackle, crickets chirp, asses bray, cocks crow, frogs croak, and ducks quack. The cat washes itself right over its ears, and when the ship's cat frolics about, the sailors hold "he has a gale of wind in his tail". Lambs, calves and cows frolicking around also are supposed to foretell rough weather.

The farmers have a saying which runs "A swarm of bees in May is worth a load of hay. A swarm of bees in June is not worth a silver spoon. A swarm of bees in July is not worth a butterfly". The Naturalist turns to the plants for his information, and so we have the Scarlet Pimpernel called the "poor man's weather glass", for it closes its petals as do Daises and Chickweed, at the approach of rain, whilst a piece of seaweed hung on the wall, will become damp when rain is near. Clusters of berries on the hawthorne and holly bushes are supposed to be signs of a hard winter, and "When the Ash before the oak, then summers all soak. When the Oak's before the Ash, then summers but a splash". We all know "Cast not a clout till May is out". "March winds and April showers bring forth may flowers", and that February is generally a wet month, and is called "February fill dyke", but we also get many other monthly warnings from the farmer. "A wet March makes a sad harvest . March dry, good rye. April wet, good wheat". A cold April brings us bread and wine, water in May brings bread through all the year. A leak in June brings harvest soon. A cold November, a warm Christmas, and an old gardener used always to say "Fog in March, Frost in May". Superstition about weather on certain days gives us "If Candlemas day (Feb.2nd) be fair and bright, winter will have another flight. If Candlemas day be cloud and rain, Then winter will not come again.

St.Swithin's day (July 15) "If thou dost rain, For fortydays
 it will remain. St.Swithin's day, if thou be fair, For forty
 days 'twill rain nae mair". "St.Bartholomew's (Aug.24) be
 clear, A prosperous Autumn comes that year." "If ducks do
 slide at Hallowtide (October), At Christmas they will swim.
 If ducks do swim at Hallowtide, At Christmas they will slide."
 "A cold November, a warm Christmas". "If New Year's Eve
 night wind blows South, it betokeneth warm and growth. If West,
 much milk, and fish in the sea. If North, cold and storms
 there will be, If East, the trees will bear much fruit. If
 North-east, flee it, man and brute".

Any of us who have old wounds, fractures, rheumatism, or
 corns, always know when wet weather is approaching, and the
 following rhyme puts it all in a nutshell. "The hollow winds
 begin to blow, the clouds look black, the glass is low. Last
 night the sun went pale to bed, the moon in shadows hid her
 head. The walls are damp, the ditches smell, Closed is the
 pink-eyed pimpernel. Hark how the chairs and tables crack,
 Old Betty's joints are on the rack. Loud quack the ducks, the
 peacocks cry, the distant hills look nigh."

"Puss on the hearth, with velvet paws, Sits smoothing o'er
 her whiskered jaws. The glow worms numerous and bright. Illumined
 the dewy dell last night. Twill surely rain, I see with sorrow
 Our jaunt must be put off tomorrow".

Other portents of rain are Bees keeping in their hive,
 geese flying, appearance of snails, cry of the peacock, or
 the donkey, swallows near the ground, noise and restlessness
 in the rookery, fish biting the bait.

HEARD IN THE FO'C'SLE.

We send our sympathy to Helen and Bob Marrion, on the sudden death of Helen's father, Mr. Smith.

During the Christmas holidays, George Goodall, Gordon Biden, Arthur Hall, and John Gillman were home on leave. John Gillman has now joined an Officer Cadet Training Unit. Dick Kent was also home from Germany for three weeks in January, looking fit, and well, and if possible, taller than ever.

During the last 12 months the following members of the Group have left School, and commenced work. Bill Manning (Bank of England) Keith Quinnen (County Hall) and Ray Quartermain, who, after a three week's holiday on the Continent, during which he visited France, Italy and Switzerland, has followed in his father's footsteps, and joined the Southern Section of British Railways. We wish them all the best of luck.

Congratulations to the Senior Troop of 3rd Tolworth Group, who have created a record. Every member of this Troop is a King's Scout. Gordon Biden was the last member of Leader to gain this award for our Group, in 1947.

During Easter, the Patrol Leaders are planning a camp at Box Hill, and the Seniors are busy preparing "Hero" for a trip to Greenhithe.

Congratulations to those members of the Senior Troop who put on such a good show at the "KINGSTON CALLING" Revue held in February.

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NAUTICAL TERMS, by Capt.J.Klinkert.

ANIMAL EXPRESSIONS:

CAT DAVIT: A heavy bulk of timber at the break of the fo'c'sle on each side to which the anchor when not in use was hoisted and secured or "catted".

DOG WATCH. A sub-division of the 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. watch into the 1st Dog Watch (4 p.m. to 6 p.m.) and the second dog watch (6 p.m. to 8 p.m.) This enabled men working four watches to change the rotation on consecutive days. The practice has now mainly ceased in the Merchant Navy with the introduction of an eight-hour day in place of the former 12 hour day.

DONKEY BOILER: A small boiler housed in the donkey boiler house for the purpose of supplying steam to auxiliaries or for use in port. In motor ships, when at sea, the exhaust gases from the main engines serve to heat this boiler.

FLEMISH HORSE: A sailing ship term, referring to a small length of chain footrope extending from just inside the lift band to the yardarm thus providing a suitable position from which to set up the head earings of the sail.

SWALLOW: The opening in a block which houses the sheave. The names of the parts of a block should be remembered in semi-rhyme "shell, sheave, bush, pin, top, bottom, swallow, score".

FISH: The term given to joining a broken spar by means of stiffeners, wedges and round lashings.

SHARKSMOUTH: A slit in an awning in the way of a stay or stanchion with provision for lacing it up.

R. R. S. "DISCOVERY".

It is with great pleasure that we are able to announce that Capt. Scott's fine old ship "Discovery" will shortly be in service again with Mr. E.P.Evans as Master.

Closed to the public and Sea Scouts in April 1948, owing to the ravages of the London atmosphere, and old age, rendering her unsafe, she has now been painted inside and out; worn rigging has been replaced, and temporary repairs made to the masts.

She was re-opened on December 30th, when a special Antarctic Exhibition was held on board, until the end of January. Over 20,000 people visited this Exhibition of relics connected with Capt.Scott, and other Arctic Explorers, and of properties, costumes, etc.used in the film "SCOTT OF THE ANTARCTIC". The proceeds of this Exhibition will be devoted towards the maintenance of the ship.

During the last war "Discovery" was used as the Headquarters of the Sea Scout Section of the River Emergency Service, and many Sea Scout Signallers were trained on board, for that service. Many Scouts took Courses on board, to fit them as potential officers in the Royal Naval Reserve.

"Discovery" survived the blitzes, flying bombs and rockets, with only minor damage, and "Leanders" look forward to many happy week-ends on board this year.

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READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY?

How many of us have gone to the Library and wandered round the shelves, bewildered, not knowing what to choose, and then in desperation taking one at random, only to find we have made a wrong choice. Well here are a few good readable books.

TOWER OF LONDON: History of the Tower and those imprisoned in, or connected with it, including Gog and Magog. Woven into a story.

OLD ST. PAULS: History of the building of St. Paul's Cathedral, and detailed accounts of the Fire of London, and the Plague. Woven into a story. Both these books by Ainsworth.

PORTSMOUTH ROAD: History of the Portsmouth Road during the coaching days, from the Elephant & Castle, to Portsmouth, mentioning Kingston, Esher, Cobham, &c. Non-fiction by C.G. Harper.

DR. BRADLEY REMEMBERS: A Doctor, retiring from practice, sits in front of the fire and remembers his struggle as a poor lad to qualify. His hospital experiences, and cases, and his battle against country superstitions and prejudices. By Francis Brett Young.

GYPSIES MARSH, a tale of a family and district in London's dockland during the "Blitz". Experiences and evacuation by Patricia Young.

Here are a few for you to choose from, and if any of you know of any others, please send a list to the Editor, who will be glad to pass on the information to our readers.

"O. for a book and a shady nook".

"KINGSTON CALLING".

Variety was the keynote of "Kingston Calling", presented by Kingston Boy Scouts Local Association at All Saints Church Hall on 17th and 18th February. All troops in the Association were represented, both in the opening chorus and again in the camp fire scene which ended the show. Sketches by 3rd Kingston Rovers, showing mothers wondering about their scout sons away at camp, and by the Leander Seniors (W.Manning, K.Armstrong, E.Coleman, and J.Vaizey) depicting the effect on married life of frequent cinema-going provoked much amusement, and were well received.

The 3rd Kingston Troop gave a smart P.T.Display, whilst "Cinderella" in the form of a (heavy-weight) ballet was acted by the Kingston Schools Troop (hardly a dignified performance for school prefects, one of the younger scholars was heard to remark!)

A conjuror and an impressionist, both friends of the Scout Movement, provided further entertainment, and the Wolf Cubs were very good in a show "Ten Little Nigger Boys", complete with the wedding scene.

The show was supported by the music of the Molesey Scout Orchestra.

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"LEANDERS" BEATEN: Sir Harold Scott, a former pathologist to the Zoological Society, writing in the Daily Telegraph said "The digestion of an ostrich is proverbial, but surely the record was that of an ostrich on which I performed an autopsy. Death resulted from a tin-opener perforating the gizzard and entering a large vein. In the stomach were, 3 handkerchiefs, 3 gloves, 3ft.of cord, 2 iron-wire staples, complete, and several fragments, 4in.nail, 4 ½d coins 2 ½d. a franc, a motor tyre valve, part of magneto spanner, collar stud, lead pencil, picture hanger, alarm clock winder, swivel, fragments of locket chain, wooden film roll, screw, and sundry small pieces of metal which had been snipped off from the wire enclosure. All these were mounted and sent to the museum of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, where they are preserved.