



THE WATER RAT

Published by
"LEANDER" (KINGSTON) SEA SCOUT GROUP

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SKIPPER'S SCRAWL

If it seems a long time since the last Water Rat, I'm afraid to admit it is - not intentional, but with considerable changes of Leadership within the Group Sections, it has been difficult to co-ordinate reports.

As Cub parents will know, Akela (Margaret King) is having to "rest" due to health reasons and I'm sure everyone joins me in wishing Margaret a speedy recovery. This has necessitated a re-shuffle and we are thankful to Neil Weatherburn for moving over from Beavers to Cubs to take command.

Meanwhile, Chris is busy recruiting help from parents for the Beavers and hopefully we will eventually have additional "warranted" Leaders for Beavers.

I am pleased the addition of girls to the Scout Section seems to be progressing well. Numbers are now considerably up, to the point that we have had to call a temporary halt to recruitment.

The programme continues in much the same vein as before and activities have included the normal camps, night hikes, etc. The Under 14 Crew did particularly well in the Great River Race, coming 2nd in their class beating Steadfast, our older boys crew and the composite Sea Ranger/Leader crew. Congratulations are also due for the troop winning the District Swimming Gala - something we have not done for a number of years now.

As you know, our safety boat was stolen last summer and it took a considerable time to get the insurance company to pay out. As an interim measure we took the decision to buy a new outboard motor to put on one of our existing dinghies whilst looking for a suitable larger vessel which we could leave on the moorings.

We have therefore just purchased a second-hand 17' Microplus day boat, powered by a 25hp outboard. The boat has a small forward cabin and large open cockpit area and should prove invaluable for accompanying the troop on river expeditions next year, as well as giving the older members the opportunity to handle a larger boat under power. The boat's size is also such that we can trail it to the coast for summer camps.

The older members of the troop have now "broken away" and are in the process of reforming the Venture Unit. They are meeting on Monday nights after Beavers and I await them formally electing a Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. With six Venture Scouts they now have an opportunity for an adventurous programme and I look forward to future reports on their activities.

On the HQ/Building front, thanks to Mr Osborn, the planks along the river frontage have now been renewed and screeding the balcony (bridge) with a waterproof "plastic" concrete is planned.

"LEANDER" (KINGSTON) SEA SCOUT GROUP

Headquarters:- 92 Lower Ham Road, Kingston, Surrey

Mick Chinnock has also volunteered to lead a concreting party to continue the surfacing at the side of the building - so volunteers from parents to help Mick please!

Finally, our thanks to Marion Duffin for again agreeing to organise the Supporters NewYear/Christmas Dinner (details at end). If you want to go, I would recommend early booking as sumbers are limited to about 50!.

KEITH MAUND - G.S.L.

BEAVERS BANTER

I think I must have been running this Beaver Colony too long; almost every activity was one that had been done before in the last three years. The main exception was the pet's evening, organised by Jan. It was a shame when she rang me to say she couldn't come!! We had guinea pigs, rabbits and hamsters, and the New Malden Dog Warden brought two dogs. The most rare sight was Harry Blackhurst's 5 week old tortoise.

We have introduced a swimming badge, awarded when a boy can swim a length. As an incentive, the Scouts have agreed to give them a trip in a boat. Unfortunately the Beaver Leader has been too busy to organise this! We are also awarding points for the lodge which gets into position quickest for our opening ceremony, thus introducing a slight degree of order into the proceedings.

CHRIS - B.L.

NESSIES NATTER

Where to start? It was such a long time ago since the last Water Rat and so much has happened.

Coxswain and Gary Mitchell took 9 boys, 2 ventures and Louise to Summer Camp in Somerset (see Coxswain's Corner). I spent three weeks in Europe at the World Scout Jamboree. It was the most amazing camp I have ever been to and am sure that I will never have an experience like it again in my lifetime.

The ting that stands out most is that 30,000 people can live together in peace. I can honestly say that there were no fights or politics or racial abuse which is pretty surprising really as you had North and South Loreans with some Cambodians thwon in for good measure. There were 163 countries represented, from as far afield as Bazil and Barbados to South Africa, Russia, Poland, Bosnia and Serbia. If you would like to know more about my exploits please feel free to come and see me.

Back to Scouts in September, with every member of the troop returning, plus a few newcomers who are now invested and fully fledged members of the troop.

The troop itself has been very busy, but what's new in that? During September we had a patrol leaders council, a few domestic changes were made and a shallenging programme created. October saw us winning the District Swimming Gala and organising some fun games at the end. The only Leaders to take part in the Leader's race were from Leander. As Chris Feltham (the DC) said, "What else can you expect from Sea Scouts?"

The last weekend in October was spent at the District Night Hike, held around Wisley Common. Our two teams completed the hike, without any assistance, coming in last, (7th and 8th respectively). The night hike was also a weekend camp which David King organised as the last part of his Chief Scout Award.

On the night David received his badge, we invested two new scouts, Louise and Karen made their promises and a large quantity of proficiency badges gained since September were given out. The crowning glory was Coxswain receiving his warrant - he had only been waiting a year!

We also made up the main part of the District Team for the County Swimming Gala. A big thank you to Alexis Childs who came along and joined the team at the very last minute, as some members of another troop (who shall remain nameless) failed to turn up. We rang him from the train on our way up to the Gala at the Shell Centre.

Nine boys attended Rememberance Sunday and looked very smart.

The other memorable event was the Assault Course Challenge. We were the only Scout Troop to enter and completed the ½ mile course in under 8½ minutes. The team decided, with the help of four burly marines, that Nessie was too clean and should be thrown in the muddy water jump - her scout shirt has never been the same since.

The last few months have been great fun with many good laughs. At long last we seem to be doing something right. Let's hope it can continue.

NESSIE

COXSWAIN'S CORNER

This year we decided to have a proper land camp and do some of the activities that, as Sea Scouts, we often don't get time to practice. Hulsh Woods camp site in Somerset was our destination, so as the school holidays started, our party of 14 set off - with very grateful assistance from the YMCA, who provided a minibus when the one we had arranged to use, from Surbiton Sea Lions, broke it's gearbox the day before.

The site, a few miles outside Taunton, is heavily wooded, with a great range of facilities. We had a really nice pitch surrounded by tall trees - as the weather was scorching hot they provided essential shade.

Despite the heat, we completed all our planned programme. We had a Hare and Hounds competition, built a very large bridge using all the pioneering timbers there, and went on a night hike - that became quite peic as some of the footpaths had been ploughed over.

Backwoodsman, Camp Cook and Pioneering badges were gained, and by popular request there was a wide game almost every night. We shot lots of tin cans and plastic bottles on the firing range and had a very well instructed archery session, where Jamie Mitchell proved to be an ace bowman. The cyclo cross course, complete with bikes varying from extremely small to impossible to ride, was great fun, especially watching to see how stylishly people fell off their mounts.

We visited the Fleet Air Museum at Yeovilton, which is very good value, complete with a whole aircraft carrier landing deck, superstructure and lots of aircraft and displays.

A day was spent at Sidmouth on the beach and even though we took a dining shelter for some shade, it was so hot we went to Exeter and cooled off in the leisure pool there. We also went to the Bridgewater Splash pool a couple of times, which proved very popular.

On the last day the weather was much cooler, so we did a hike across the Quantock Hills - terrific views of Wales and the Bristol Channel to the North and Dartmoor to the South.

The high spot of camp was our adventure caving trip in the Cheddar Caves. With boots, boiler suits and miner's headlamps, we crawled through narrow passages, squeezed through some very tight holes and really enjoyed ourselves.

Nobody will forget the heat and the incredible numbers of wasps at Hulsh Woods. Lots of jasper traps were made and rapidly filled up with wasps, though luckily very few people were stung. Jamie also became our wasp expert, studying them very closely whilst surrounded by clouds of insects.

Moments worth remembering - Matt Freeman not being able to pass a tree without climbing it and Alexis Childs establishing a new Leander record by finishing off ALL the chips left over from a huge fish and chip supper in Bridgewater!

The last day came, so we struck camp, packed the trailer and set off. We had only gone a few miles when the smell of hot oil and rubber became very obvious. A vital oil cap had gone and we had lost a lot of oil. Gary, who had driven us everywhere brilliantly, then had to call the AA out, who, after a long wait, got us back on the road and we eventually arrived at Leander late at night.

All in all, a really enjoyable camp, with an excellent Scouting spirit. It made a good change but it will be nice to take the boats to camp next year.

SCOUT HANDBOOK In the near future, we hope to issue every Scout with a looseleaf book which will form the basis of his or her own personal, patrol and troop reference file. The idea is that the handbook will be given to each scout as they are invested and will contain basic information on uniform, attendance, safety rules, boating orders, etc. Other sheets, on badges, patrols and activities can be added as they are made available.

The current Leander Progress Cards need to be updated as there have been quite a few changes to badge requirements, so it seemed a good idea to amend the cards and produce a handbook that will provide up to date information on all badges and awards.

Everyone should find this very useful, as they can get a good idea of exactly what is involved as a Scout progresses through the troop.

COXSWAIN

WATER RAT SMALL ADS

Have you anything to sell or do you want to advertise for any items? Advertise in the Water Rat - £1.00 per Ad

Details of items for sale to: Anji Tindall
28 Deacon Road,
Kingston
549 7225

FOR SALE*FOR SALE***FOR SALE***FOR SALE***FOR SALE***FOR SALE**

GUL CLASSIC JUNIOR WET SUIT
Size XXL (Up to 5'2")

Good condition £40.00 (£100 new)

Contact Anji Tindall 549-7225

FOR SALE*FOR SALE***FOR SALE***FOR SALE***FOR SALE***FOR SALE**

SUPPORTERS NEW YEAR/CHRISTMAS DINNER - SATURDAY 13TH JANUARY 1996

APPLICATION FOR TICKETS AT £8.50 EACH

I/We require _____ places reserved for the Dinner Party.

Enclosed cheque for £_____ @ £8.50 per person.

PLEASE SUBMIT PAYMENT WITH APPLICATION FORM (Cheques payable to M DUFFIN)

Full names of persons attending

.....

Contact Address

..... Tel no:.....

PLEASE RETURN TO: MRS M DUFFIN, 17 ARTHUR ROAD, KINGSTON UPON THAMES, SURREY, KT2 6BA.

(For further details please contact Marion on 549-2317)
