



The Water Rat

Published by Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

December 1996

Skipper's Scrawl

With the festive season on us again, I hope this edition of *The Water Rat* reaches you in time to extend best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

December starts with the annual Guild Christmas Dinner, followed by section 'end of term' parties and, of course, the New Year Supporters' Dinner – have you booked your place yet? Space is limited so, if you want to go and haven't booked yet, phone Marion Duffin (549 2317) straight away!

Christmas and the January sales always seem a drain on the family budget, with a tightening of belts afterwards. The Group will also be examining how to improve liquidity in the New Year and hopefully we can come up with some fund raising ideas which do not involve too much hard work. One means of increasing the Group's income is by utilizing our assets by hiring out equipment and, of course, the hall. (Did you know we have a scaffold tower? – ideal for painting eaves, etc.) Have you considered using our premises for a children's party? Speak to Chris Osborne if you think you would like to make a booking.

I have just received a cheque for £35 from the Great River Race organisers – prize money for the under-14, crew who came 2nd in their class. Our nominated charity was the Treloar fund to help disabled Scouts, and so this money has now been passed on. Well done to the crew!

Similarly, well done to our mixed team who entered the Rotary Club Assault Course Challenge and came away with the cup for the fastest in their class. This was an enjoyable event and thanks go to Angie and Madelaine who acted as official nurses and caterers and raised £110 for the Group funds.

Looking ahead to December 1997 and January 1998, the next World Jamboree is to be held in Chile. Kingston and Malden District will be sending two representatives, who must be between the ages of 14 and 18 at the time of the Jamboree. The cost of attending will be in the region of £2000 and those selected will be expected to find about a third of the money themselves. A world Jamboree is a unique experience (I went to Greece back in the '60s!). Any Scouts wishing to be nominated should let Coxswain know as soon as possible, since nominations have to be in by the end of December.

Keith



The **reef knot** is only used in simple applications. The Ashley Book of Knots says "it is a true binder knot, for which it is admirable, but under no circumstances should it be used as a bend." It is easy to tie and will not jam, so it is always easy to untie. It is used for binding rolled sails, tying packages, and as a basis for the shoe bow. Its relatives, the granny, the thief knot and

the what-knot, all have their purposes, but not as trustworthy knots.



The **granny knot** is dangerous and untrustworthy. One moment it slips, the other it jams.

(Information from Ropers Knots Page
<http://huizen.dds.nl/~erpprs/kne/kroot.htm>)

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

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Coxswain's Corner

At this time of the year, the Troop is on shore and heavily involved with badge work and learning seamanship skills (thanks Ness and Gary for their help) – those long sunny days on the water seem far away. However, there are plenty of activities to report on since the last Water Rat.

The Hare and Hounds Competition at the end of September saw two Leander teams camping, bivvying and flag-raiding at Broadstone Warren, in Ashdown Forest. This year there were no winning teams as the “bending of the rules” by certain teams (NOT Leander), made it impossible to come to a fair decision. Everybody enjoyed themselves though and there is always next year.

At the annual Assault Course Challenge at Southwood Activity Centre, Tolworth, we put in two teams (the only Scout entries) – Alastair Waddell, Michael King, Jonathan Burr and James Mitchell, and a mixed team of Alex Newman, Bassie Tyndall, Alexis Childs and Karen Loizou. The conditions were wet and muddy, but both did extremely well, with very good times, the mixed team attaining the fastest time and picking up a nice trophy. Well done all!

Remembrance Sunday was very cold and raw – Leander PLs, APLs and Leaders were the only Scout representatives on parade, but all looked very smart handing out hymn sheets and carrying out duties in the Church.

The Night Hike, which we were organising, had a very poor response from the rest of the District (we had at least three teams keen to take part), so we had no alternative but to postpone the event until next March. Fifteen Scouts and two Leaders recently went skating at the Spectrum Centre at Guildford. Going by train from Surbiton worked very well, but no group reductions for short distance rail travel any more. Nippiest skaters were Oliver Seely and Matthew King, neither of whom had ever been on the ice before. For those who could not go this time, there will be another session after Christmas.

A large number of proficiency Badge books have been distributed, with plenty of badges now being gained. Amongst the new badges that have recently been introduced is a Pulling Badge, which the whole troop should be able to get!

Forestry skills have recently been put to use, as we had to take down the large poplar tree at the back of the Headquarters – it was pushing the fence down and was also beginning to rot. Over two weekends, felling axes were wielded and the task was accomplished very efficiently.

Finally, on a pleasing note, attendance at both Tuesday and Saturday meetings has been very good, with a

noticeable improvement in uniform standards – regular inspections must be having some effect.

First Meeting after Christmas - Tuesday 7th January 1997.

Coxswain

from the Scout Association

New legislation has recently been introduced to increase the safety of young people taking part in adventurous activities. The activities concerned are, in general terms: caving, climbing, trekking and water sports. You may have read, or seen, that some centres which provide instruction in such activities need to be licensed. These are generally those centres operating in a commercial manner – when payment for instruction is made.

The Scout Association – along with many other voluntary youth organisations – is exempt from the requirements to be licensed, under most circumstances. However, I wish to assure all parents that The Scout Association has for many years operated a policy which ensures that the safety of our members, taking part in adventurous activities, is given the highest priority.

Before starting any adventurous activity Leaders and Instructors must apply to be authorised to lead or supervise the party. They have to show that they have the skills to work with young people and also that they are competent in the chosen activity. A practical assessment of these skills is usually required. We work very closely with National Governing Bodies (such as the British Canoe Union and the Mountain Leader Training Board) and our Leaders/Instructors are encouraged to continue their training – to gain nationally recognised qualifications in the chosen activity.

Tony Andrews
(National Commissioner for Activities)

Cub Report

Here is a section you have not heard from for a long time, so let's get up to date.

Since Neill left to take his Sergeant exams, the Cubs have been left in limbo. We called for help from the District and up came John Dadds. John has been involved with Leander in the past; I can recall when my own son was a cub and we were in the same situation, my wife and John ran the Cub section for quite a while. Eighteen years later he is back again, only this time I am helping him with Mike Freeman, a parent who has been a great asset.

John is, however, under great pressure from the District to join their training squad, so Leander is running out of time. Again the plea is out: who knows of anyone who is willing to take a warrant out to run the section? Is there a Granddad, Grandmother, Uncle, Aunt, Mum or Dad who can give a little time to help the young chaps?

However, what has been happening in the cubs? The programme goes on, maybe not in full force as it should,

but I can assure you the cubs have not suffered from lack of learning and having fun. The numbers have not fallen, so something is going right.

A lot of badges have been gained and plans are being made for a camp in 1997. If we can get the help, trips out on a Saturday are also on the cards.

I apologise again for the confusion regarding the paying of the subs, and I hope my second letter has put your mind at ease. Again I ask you to settle up with our treasurer as soon as possible, as I have spent a fortune on equipment for the Cubs.

Mick Chinnock (Chief)

Rowing hints from the Guild News sheet

Gig Rowing - Some reminders

The legs slightly bent. If in doubt "overstretcher" rather than under.

Hands about 6" apart with the outer little finger pressing against the end of the loom.

Recognise that a lever system is in operation where, contrary to general belief, the boat is the load, you are the effort and the blade/water is the fulcrum. In other words the blade should stay stationary and the boat move past it.

Use the flats on the button as much as possible to get a good feather on the return and a square entry on the catch.

On the return keep the blade as close to the water as possible and get a good catch at the furthest part of the stroke. A high blade leads to an "air shot".

Hold the feather as long as you can. (If you were in an 'eight' you would be told to start to rotate at the mid stroke position,. You would however be rowing at twice the speed and hence only have half. the time).

Make sure you enter square. Under-square causes the blade to go deep; you only want it covered and the centre of gravity as far from the boat as possible.

Reach into the stroke as much as possible and stretch the arms. At the beginning of the power stroke keep the arms stretched, or straight, bringing the whole body back and then pull it upright by bringing the loom into the belly button. Aim to be compact by bringing the elbows close to the body. Keep the eyes horizontal. Keep the stroke long.

Don't do yourself a mischief.

From the Chair

The Group Executive Committee met on 4th November. It was pleasing to hear that the sections are all maintaining good programmes despite the continuing shortage of leaders and adult help as mentioned by Chief elsewhere.

Some time was spent discussing fund raising. Leander has always been fortunate in have a number of parents and supporters willing to organise and help at a variety of different events to raise funds so that all members can enjoy good facilities without the subs being too high. We are fortunate today that parents have raised about £1100 during the last year through Sunday teas, fairs and the Regatta. However it does rely on a very few to keep this going. Income from subs was about £2760 during the last financial year. Subscription collection is an extra burden on our already overworked leaders and we are hoping that more parents will pay the Treasurer directly as soon as this can be organised. This will also have the advantage of ensuring a steady flow of income to Group funds to meet the regular bills. Use of the premises is a possible source of increased income and Keith has explained that it is available for children's parties (up to 13 years old), etc. He also has some contacts for other attractions which might be available, such as a bouncy castle!!

I was very sad to hear in November of the death of Connie Leyshon, after a short illness. Connie was Cub Scout

Leader of Leander for many years in the early sixties and, as a Scout, I was an Instructor with the Cub Pack under her guidance as "Akela".



The picture shows her at about this time. She and Ron were both good friends of Leander and they will both be missed by all in local Scouting, particularly Ajax Sea Scouts, with whom they were closely associated.

Please send any items for the *Water Rat* to me by fax, on 255 3121, or by e-mail at

nigel@duffin.demon.co.uk.

Nigel Duffin (Chair of Executive)

Leander Annual Dinner

The Leander Supporters' Annual Christmas/New Year Dinner this year is Saturday 11th January 1997 and costs £8.50 per head, excluding wine, which is available by the bottle. This dinner is limited to about fifty and is always very popular, so book soon!

Please send a cheque (payable to M Duffin) with the application form to Marion Duffin. For further details, contact Marion on 0181 549 2317.

Leander Supporters' Annual Dinner – Saturday 11th January 1997

Please reserve places for the Dinner

A cheque for is enclosed (£8.50 per person, payable to M Duffin)

Full names of those attending

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To: Marion Duffin, 17 Arthur Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 6BA