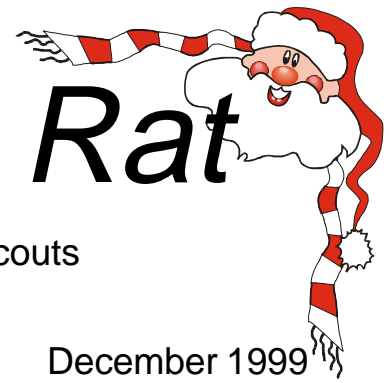


The Water Rat

Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts



December 1999

Skipper's Scrawl

I would like to wish you all a Happy Christmas and all the best for the year 2000. We have purposely left this *Water Rat* to the last moment so that you can all be informed of the changes to be made at HQ and the forthcoming RN Inspection.

In the last newsletter, I expressed concern about the state of the carpet. The Executive Committee has decided that we must act promptly on this issue and, provided all goes to plan, the whole of the Main Deck will be covered with industrial quality vinyl flooring starting on the 6th January. This should take about three days to lay and Nick Wileman will then be sealing the surface before any meetings take place. This should then give us a hardwearing surface which will be easier to keep clean.

A large roll of carpet has also been purchased and will be used to re-carpet the wardroom and also make four large carpet squares for Beavers to use in their lodges. In addition, the river end of the hall will have a removable carpet for a 'Quiet Area' (if such a thing is possible with Beavers and Cubs!)

In order to keep labour costs to a minimum we have undertaken to remove the existing carpet and need to completely clear the Hall and Chartroom so the contractors have a completely clear floor area. To this end, a working party is planned for the Sunday morning of **2nd January** – a chance to work of the over indulgences of the festive period. We need at least 8 fit parents to help, so please give me a ring to let me know if you can assist. (0181 399 5846)

As you will appreciate, the cost of this work will be considerable and will be making quite a hole in the funds. I have, however, been told by Nick Wileman that almost half the cost would be covered if out-

standing subs were brought up to date. I will therefore be sending a reminder to those in arrears and, although I appreciate this is an expensive time of year for family budgets, would urge everyone to get their subs in for the next 'term' as soon as possible.

The second major event for the New Year will be our RN Inspection, which is scheduled for the **22nd February**. There will be a new inspecting officer, Lt. Commander Ellis, and, as this will be an indoor Inspection, we will be somewhat restricted for space. It has therefore been decided that all Scouts and Venture Scouts, but only the older Cubs, will attend. Further details will be given out to sections shortly but please make a note of the date in your new diaries now, as we need everyone on parade on the night, despite the fact it is half term.

Keith

Beavers learn new skills

The Beavers had an interesting and informative visit from St John's Ambulance in November and learnt some practical life saving skills, including how to dial 999 and how to perform the kiss of life.

Congratulations go to Rory Lightfoot for gaining his first swimming badge and to all the Beavers who came carol singing at Kingston Hospital and performed so well that we've been invited back next year.

This term we say goodbye to Tom Lawn, Jake Mellett, Matthew Paterson, Alex Barley, Thomas Williams and Nicholas Whitaker who all move up to Cubs and we look forward to welcoming some new Beavers to the colony in January.

Ros and Catie

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Coxswain's Corner

This Autumn seems to have been busy, although there have not been quite as many activities as usual to get involved in. The District Trek Cart race in Richmond Park was postponed, as was the dry slope skiing at Sandown Park. A good turnout went skating at the Spectrum Centre in Guildford, with some star performances from some of the younger scouts who had never been on the ice before.

By popular request we put on another cooking competition, each patrol had to devise a menu – starter, main course and sweet – at a cost of £2 per head, which was then judged on taste, presentation and teamwork. Overall the standard was very good with some quite original and very tasty meals submitted. This has now become a regular event; Scouts should all be able to look after themselves and being able to cook a variety of meals is a real asset.

It was disappointing not to get a place at the RN Football competition, mainly because the entry forms went astray, then we were told that we had not got into the RN Swimming Gala, but we have now been allocated a place. This will be 4th-6th February and is a great weekend at HMS Raleigh in Plymouth, with lots of skills activities, as well as the swimming, at a busy working naval base.

We will also have the advantage of meeting the new Inspecting Officer for Sea Scouts, as the Group's Admiralty Inspection will be on Tuesday 22nd February 2000. This is the first time we will have had a Winter inspection, so, not being able to carry out any water activities, we are planning a comprehensive display of seamanship skills and instruction.

As always, this is a very important event and Leander intends to retain our RN Recognition. Everyone will have to put some effort into appearing smart and well turned out, we will concentrate on refining selected skills so that we give the right impression to a new Inspecting Officer of a well run Sea Scout Troop who can display the right abilities and enthusiasm.

I have been very busy with work and moving house, and have not been able to devote as much time to Scouts as usual, so my thanks to Karen for running an increasing amount of meetings and activities. She has also put all the records on computer in the Scout Office (thanks to Keith), which will hopefully make things more efficient.

Summer Camp will be in the Isle of Wight, at Corfe Scout Camp Site, an excellent site which we last went to a few years ago and we have used regularly in the past. We will be taking boats and canoes with us, plus there is a huge range of things to do on the island. Will parents please check with the separate notice you will have received regarding the dates, as the school summer holidays start early in 2000.

Coxswain

Cubs have a good year

The Cubs have had a good year, with two five-a-side trophies and a win in the District Swimming Gala. We must thank Buffy for running the Gala efficiently this year.

The last term was a mixed one of games, craft and other events, including a USA theme night, run by Simon Reeves.

Boys have all progressed in the award Badge work and various badges will be awarded next term. Lots of boys are now up to badge 2 in the swimmers (Thanks to Claire and Buffy).

Next term we will be allowed to have a section of the pool at New Malden, so the boys can have space and swim in clothes for the badges. This is good preparation for their move to Scouts. This term we say goodbye to David Chappell, Mark Sollis, Sam Whitfield, Mark Wileman, William Mitchell and Thomas Young, and look forward to welcoming those coming up from Beavers in the new year.

Akela (Tim)

Dates for your Diary

Jan 2 – 9:30am Working Party for carpet
Jan 17 – Executive Committee meeting
Feb 13 – 10am Working Party: painting Main Deck, clearing Boat Deck
Feb 22 – RN Inspection
Mar 11 – *Water Rat* copy date
Mar 12 – 10am Working Party: jobs t.b.a.
Mar 20 – Executive Committee meeting
May 13 – *Water Rat* copy date
Jun 15 – Executive Committee meeting
Jul 2 – Regatta
Jul 15 – *Water Rat* copy date

Sunday Working Parties – new arrangements

Parents' working parties on the second Sunday of each month have been very successful during the last year in keeping up with regular cleaning and maintenance of the Headquarters. Leaders have been able to devote more of their valuable time to organising meetings and activities. In March, all Leander families were divided into groups of eight or nine and one parent from each family was asked to come along on one of the second Sundays in the month, arranging swaps where necessary.

This coming year, based on last year's experience, there will be slightly different arrangements. Cleaning kitchen and toilets, hoovering, sweeping, etc. need to be done rather more frequently, so twice a month, on the second and fourth Sundays, from 10:00 to 12:00, there will be a **Cleaning Party** with four or five families. We're halving the numbers and doubling the frequency, so not asking you to do more!

In addition, for specific maintenance/DIY jobs, we will ask for volunteers for a **Maintenance Party** on the second Sunday of the month. A notice will be posted at HQ giving the planned jobs and those willing are asked to sign up. The first one of the year will be on February 13th, to paint the Main Deck and clear the Boat Deck. This will mean the place is 'shipshape' for the RN Inspection. Last year this painting took a group of four people a few hours to complete. Do we have a volunteer to organise this?

For the Cleaning Rota, we have allocated each family to a date as shown below. If you are unable to have some one attend on that day, please *arrange a swap* with another family. I know that you will be as keen as I am to maintain our excellent facilities in the best condition we can.

Keith

January 9th – Akbar, Aviran, Barley, Barnard,

January 23rd – Blackhurst, Bolster, Brady, Bray,

February 13th – Carter, Carter, Childs, Ford, (also Maintenance Party)

February 27th – Foster, Geal, Hazard, Healy,

March 12th – Hudson, Irons, Kearns, King(x2), (also Maintenance Party)

March 26th – Lawn, Leo, Liefkes, Lightfoot,

April 9th – Livesey, Mandale, Manson, Mellett, (also Maintenance Party)

April 30th (moved from Easter Sunday) – Mitchell, Newman, Origo, Osborne,

May 14th – Packer, Pearn, Pratt, Rhoades, (also Maintenance Party)

May 28th – Rowland, Seeley, Snow, Sollis,

June 11th – Thomas, Tindall, Veillet, Walters, (also Maintenance Party)

June 25th – Whitaker, Whitfield, Williams, Williamson,

July 9th – Wingrove, Woodhouse, Woods, Yagnick, Young. (also Maintenance Party)