

The Water Rat

Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

March 2001

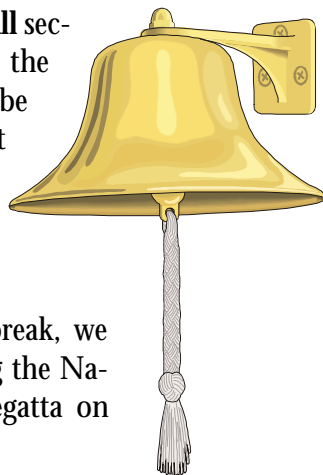
Skippers Scrawl

As the (hopefully) finer weather approaches we can look forward to getting out on the river again and returning to more of an outside programme. As you will be aware, it is essential that all members can swim before they can go up to the Scout section and it is for this reason we have always included swimming in the Beaver programme. Unfortunately, the Company that runs the Malden pool is now enforcing a strict ratio of one adult to two children for under-eights and therefore it is now impractical to continue to include this in the programme. We are trying to find another pool to use where we can return to our normal ratio of one to four but regrettably in the meantime we will only be able to include swimming from cub age and upwards.

I will leave reports on the sections to their respective leaders but would like to emphasise three important events in our calendar.

The St George's day parade will be on 29th April at St James' Church, New Malden. This is for **all** sections so please note the date now – we will be mustering at about 1400 hrs, but full details will be available nearer the time.

Following a year's break, we will again be hosting the National Sea Scout Regatta on



Saturday 30th June & Sunday 1st July and will also be joined by the Sea Ranger Association. I am expecting about 200-300 competitors, so we will need a lot of help from parents to set up and clear away and also to take care of refreshments on the towpath, etc.

Finally, advance notice that we have been given the date for our next R.N. Inspection which will be on Tuesday 11th September. This is a most important event and all Beavers, Cubs and Scouts must be there. Please note the date now.

Keith Maund

New Programme ... New Uniform ...

You will know that the Scout Association is putting in place changes in section ages, programme and uniform.

In order to explain how we are planning to implement these in Leander, there will be a **Parents' Evening** on Thursday 17th May at 7.30p.m. This will be a very important meeting, explaining the way forward, and will be combined with our A.G.M. for this year.

Please put the date in your diary now and make sure that at least one parent from your family is able to attend.

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

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Beavers make the most of Winter

With the dark nights upon us the Beaver Colony has been keeping busy within the warm(ish) confines of the hut.

Following the success of last Summer's Olympics, we staged a repeat Winter games, with a variety of games such as: Shove The Puc, Winter Clothes Relay, and the very tightly contested Hockey Slalom. The contest resulted in a tie for second, with the winning penalty in the shoot-out scored by Charlotte Pearce for Starboard.



We also welcomed four new Beavers to the colony: Thomas Harrison in Port, Louis Lafon in Fore, and Charlotte Pearce and Zoe D'Souza for Starboard. They were all successfully invested on 12th February by the Skipper.



Swimming initially continued at the Malden Centre, but was stopped early by much stricter new Health and Safety regs. These require a Beaver to Adult ratio in the water of 2:1, which we decided was unworkable with a total colony of 19. Keith Maund is in discussion with the Authorities, and a solution is expected for the Spring

term. In the meantime all Swimming nights have been converted into additional Hut activities, which have stretched our creative skills!

We celebrated Shrove Tuesday with a traditional Pancake race, which was keenly contested by all four Lodges. The Beavers were so adept at flipping the 'cakes that we ran two races, with flipping allowed while running – which only resulted in minor trips to the floor for the pancakes!



The build-up to Easter will include Basket making, for the bringing home of Biscuits and Cakes – Plus of course the Eggs after the party on 2nd April.

Tony, Ros, Keith and James.

£750 grant for rates

Kington Council has made a grant of £750 to Leander towards our rate bill. If you are in communication with a councillor, why not mention what good use we make of Council support?

John Parsley

John Parsley, parent and helper in Leander in the late 1960s and 1970s, has died at the age of 76. He and his wife Barbara worked tirelessly fundraising for Leander while their son, Stefan Davies, was a member of the Group.

Coxwain's Corner

As we all wait for the days to lengthen and look forward to getting out on the water, the Troop is carrying on with all the possible preparation that can be done. A lot of effort has been put in to all the seamanship awards and as much scout proficiency awards work as possible. With a recent increase in troop numbers, we are once again absolutely full, with boys and girls still on the waiting list.

We have had some fun as well, a very competitive inter patrol cooking competition in February was judged by Andy Harris, County Scout Leader, with some inventive menus and a high standard of preparation and cooking.

We have also refreshed pioneering skills and built amazingly long and complex bridges, patrols have been shipwrecked and constructed a desert island survival shelter – very ingenious they were as well.

Unfortunately this year we were not able to attend the RN Swimming Gala at HMS Raleigh as the number of competing teams has been reduced with only 18 troops out of 100 taking part.

We were extremely lucky in being able to hold the District Night Hike, with teams from 1st Kingston Hill, 7th Malden and Leander navigating across 7 miles of woodland and heath terrain around Ockley Common near Godalming. Our B team was first and the A team came third, an excellent result on what was a very cold and snowy night, with some really quite difficult map reading and orienteering decisions having to be made. Everybody returned to Leander HQ for a warm nights sleep and a fine breakfast prepared by the 7th Malden Fellowship. It was also good to see our Ventures in attendance, putting their skills to work without the use of a map!

A number of Scouts have been attending the Air Rifle course at 1st Malden, so we now have some up and coming marksmen. In addition, Jack and Thomas Young have now acquired their Master

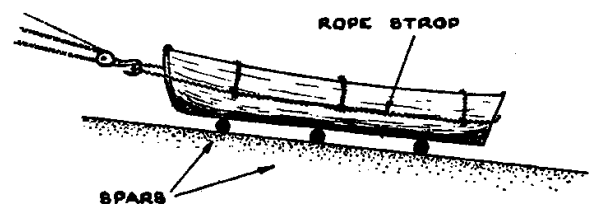
at Arms awards, so we have two really good marksmen in the troop. There is a District Air Rifle competition coming up: we could put a good team in this time and who knows, we might do well.

Foot and Mouth meant that the County Night Hike was cancelled and this may affect the planned Easter Camp for the Seniors at Polyapes.

Summer Camp will be in the Brecon Beacons at the beginning of August, we are going to *Cymru 2000*, the Welsh Jamboree, with a great range of activities to participate in – it's still not too late for any Scouts to join the party.

Coxswain

Guild launches into next year



HAULING OUT

At the Leander Guild's A.G.M. in February a brand new (well, nearly new) committee was elected to give a new lease of life for the coming year. Plans for the monthly meetings are already published (such verve – where do they get it from?) and activities include the usual rowing trips and nostalgia fests, as well as bowls, skittles, an Absent Friends' weekend and Christmas Dinner. And I see from their accounts, that they still had the energy to raise £500 for Group funds last year.

On the archives front, they've been picking nuggets from *Water Rats* from half a century ago and transferring films of Summer Camps in 1951, 52 & 53.

Phew! – it makes me feel old!



The wrong way.

Family Camp 2002

We plan to hold a family camp at Downe Scout Camp Site, Kent, over Spring Bank Holiday weekend 2002. At the last family camp we had over 120 Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, brothers, sisters and parents, all under canvas. It is a great event so make a note in your diary now.

Dates for your Diary

- April 8 – HQ Working Party: *Freeman, Foster, Goodall, Harrison, Hazard, Healy
- April 22 – HQ Working Party: *Hudson, Kearns, King, Lafon, Liefkes, Lightfoot
- April 29 – St George's Day Parade
- April 30 – Executive Committee, 8p.m.
(*note change of date*)
- May 13 – *Water Rat* copy date
- May 13 – HQ Working Party: *Livesey, Manson, McGuiness, Mellett, Mitchell, Osborne
- May 17 – Parents' Evening to outline programme and uniform changes.
- June 10 – HQ Working Party: *Paintin, Patterson, Pearn, Pratt, Seeley, Snow
- June 18 – Executive Committee, 8p.m.
- June 24 – HQ Workng Party
- June 30/July 1 – National Sea Scout Regatta
- July 8 – HQ Working Party
- July 15 – *Water Rat* copy date
- September 11 – R.N. Inspection

The District Night Hike

When I got to the Leander Sea Scout house on the 24th February at 5 o'clock we were split into two groups. I was in Patrick's group. By six o'clock I was in Nathan's mum's car with a few others on the way to Guildford. At about 6:45 we got there.

By eight o'clock we had set off walking, I was excited by now, as it was my first night hike. It was an especially cold night and there were temperatures under zero; it was quite spooky. Two hours later we arrived at a caravan with a scout leader who was giving out hot drinks. About half an hour later Leander came to some marshland (that we were not meant to encounter!) There were the odd shoes and boots getting stuck! It was really funny. We had to follow a map route and navigate by ourselves and it was quite an experience. At about half past midnight it started to snow and Nathan decided to roll down a hill (by this time he was going nuts because he'd had so many energizer tablets!) Suddenly he stopped when Patrick told him that it was a horse track and he might come across something peculiar (I can't give a full description in the text!) About half an hour later we got to the vehicles and were puffed out, most of us slept on the way back.

When we got back to Leander it was about three o'clock and we had some nice tea and cake! Before I went to sleep I gave Miles a sleeping bag match! At 7:30 in the morning we had the opportunity either to eat cereal, or bacon on toast, or baked beans and egg. I must say it was a 5-star breakfast. After that we all started to leave. By now it was the 25th of February. I conked out until the next morning.

Alon Aviram



The Right Way.