



The Water Rat

Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

March 2003

editor – Nigel Duffin

Skipper's Scrawl

As the lighter nights approach we look forward to returning to an outside programme, although in fact the Scouts have just finished their night hike and cooking competition, in both of which they did well (see the Troop report).

The first main event will be our annual St. George's Day parade, when we join with the rest of the district. This year it is being held in New Malden on **SUNDAY 27th APRIL**. We will be meeting at 14.20hrs at the Crescent Centre behind the Blagdon Road car park and after the service will finish about 16.30hrs at Presburg Road. This is a parade for ALL sections, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers. I know it is just at the end of the Easter holiday but would ask you all to note the date now. Further details will be circulated when available.

The cost of uniforms keeps on increasing and, to help keep down costs and also maintain our Group identity, the Staff Officer for Scouts at Portsmouth has arranged for us, as a RN recognised group, to be able to purchase caps through naval stores. We shall therefore be ordering a supply for Scouts and Explorers which, I hope for those new Scouts who have not yet got them, may be in time for the parade. We have also ordered from them a special baseball cap which is being produced by them for our Scouts and Explorers to wear on less formal

occasions. It will have an embroidered anchor together with our RN recognition number. The cap will later be available for our Cubs.

You may have noticed that posts are being installed by the council on the road outside the HQ. This is part of a traffic calming scheme which should make crossing to launch boats safer. A 20mph speed limit is proposed and also traffic is being reduced to a single carriageway immediately in front of the building. Double yellow bands are also planned to prevent parking in the immediate vicinity of the front of the building, although loading will obviously still be permitted for us. Hopefully, this scheme will be finished in the near future and, when it is, Scout parents may wish to use the Albany Park Road entrance when picking up. The side door will also be kept closed, although we will be ensuring that the side gate is kept unlocked when meetings are in progress so that you can still gain entry from the Lower Ham Road end.

Finally, another date for your diary. The group AGM will be held on Thursday 15th May when we hope Ruth will be able to tell us all about her experience at the World Jamboree in Thailand.

Keith

Explorers

Explorers have been helping Steve and the Cubs, going down in twos and threes to help out at the meetings.

They were also recently rattling tins at the shoppers in the Bentall Centre, in a collection for the RNLI.

Further afield, Explorers looked after a base in the County Scout Night Hike, which is reported in Coxswain's news.

On the water, some serious Regatta practice is being planned for the event in July – the Explorers now effectively have their own age range.

On the Boat Deck, they are stripping sanding and getting ready to paint the Coypup dinghies, now becoming rather venerable in their old age.

For the coming months, a sponsored *Monopoly Run* is planned, where you have to visit all the locations on a *Monopoly* board. (This doesn't actually involve running, I'm told – apparently public transport is used, but hopefully not the 'Go to Jail' card.)

At the Ham Fair, they plan to run a games stall, and, for the Summer, to join the Troop in camp at Broadstone Warren.

Karen

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

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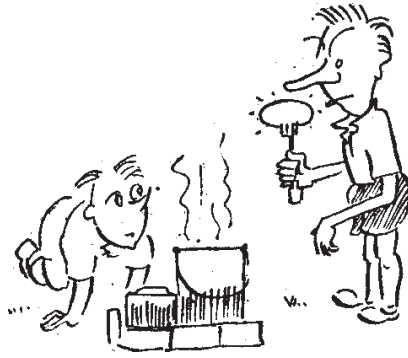


Coxswain's Corner

Some of you may be wondering how the new Scout programme is working out, now that we have been applying it since it was officially launched last autumn. As a Sea Scout group we have to combine the new elements with those seamanship and nautical skills we traditionally work with. So far it seems to be working out quite reasonably, with some new and original activities. However, with the older boys and girls now in a separate Explorer unit, we have lost the very valuable leadership and skills base that they were able to provide. We have completely reorganised the patrols with new PLs and APLs, although they are very keen, 13-year-olds are still very much in the learning mode, which means the Troop is much more reliant on the Leaders. This involves more work and planning for Karen, Ian and myself, as every meeting needs to be organised in far more detail.

We have divided the term programme so that each leader is responsible for an evening's meeting. Here are a few examples. Ian had a great event including charades – we do have some fine actors – and introduced the Troop to the fascinating intricacies of semaphore – with some very original messages. Karen has put everyone through a 'fit for life' session, with mini circuit training and lots of exercises, and recently organised a Troop election. This was very successful, as each patrol had to put up a candidate for Troop Leader for the night, with lots of banners and speeches. Nick Pratt gained the greatest number of votes, with a fine rousing election speech, closely trailed by Jed Wingrove. Nick then ran the rest of the meeting, chose a game, conducted colours and closed the meeting.

In February, the County Cooking competition took place at the 1st Hook HQ in Surbiton, with 26 teams determined to demonstrate their cuisine skills. With only one point separating them from the winning team, Leander came second, an excellent result, possibly assisted by the patrol cooking competition we had held two weeks before.



Recently, the County Night Exercise attracted over 250 scouts in 39 teams who set out after dark from Polyapes District Campsite at Stoke d'Abernon. Their mission was to navigate a course between checkpoints (that they had to find using grid references) and to complete various tasks at five bases. The course took them across Oxshott and Esher Commons, a mixture of dry sandy heath, woodland and occasional muddy paths.

It was a beautiful night with a clear sky and brilliant moonlight, so bright that torches were not really needed. Ian and I were roving marshals, spending the night walking across the commons, making sure teams were on course and OK.

The final scores had to be revalidated, due to a spreadsheet error, with the Leander team in 9th place – if they had not missed out the 5th incident, the team score would have put them into the first three places. Always next year of course.

Coxswain

Return of the Mutineers

Activity is starting again, with one of the Home Counties Gigs being prepared for varnishing, and no doubt we shall be out on the water fairly soon, as the stream is now much more favourable. New Mutineers are welcome, if anyone is interested, get in touch with Ian Chappell or Coxswain.

Coxswain

Sunday Morning Working Parties

Don't forget – we rely on you to keep the HQ 'ship-shape'!

Parents' working parties on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month are for regular cleaning and maintenance of the HQ, allowing our Leaders to get on with planning and running programmes.

All Leander families (except leaders) are divided into groups of four or five and one parent from each family is asked to come along from 10:00 to 12:00, arranging swaps if necessary. This rota started in September. A new rota starts at the end of February

Please would the **first named* on the list arrange to collect a key from Mike Freeman (020 8549 8634).

April 13 – *Ford, Foster, Freeman, Geraghty

April 27 – *Goodall, Harrison, Hazard, Kersey

May 11 – *King, Lafon, Lear, Lightfoot, Maguire

June 8 – *Manson, McDonagh, McGuinness, Mellett, Merridan

June 22 – *Mitchell, Osborne, Ozdilli, Paintin, Pearn

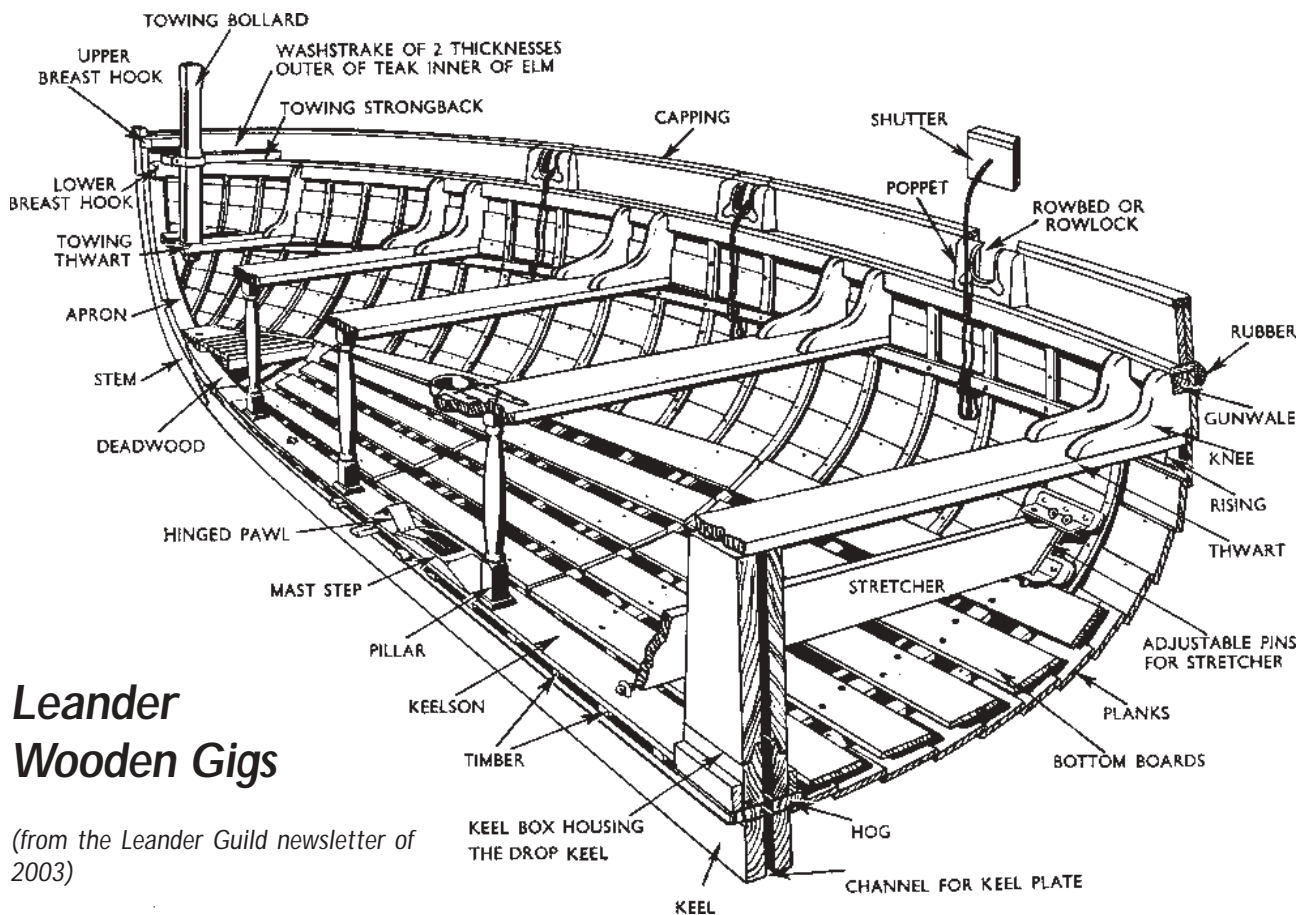
July 13 – *Peto, Pratt, Smith, Steele, Taylor

September – *Walters, Whitfield, Wingrove, Woods, Young

Ham Fair

The Ham fair is always a good fund raising event for Leander, taking place in late May. This year we want to be well organised in advance: any one who can help, for an hour or so, please let Karen know.

Coxswain



Leander Wooden Gigs

(from the Leander Guild newsletter of 2003)

After The 1939-45 War, Leander Sea Scout Troop camped at Martham in Norfolk on land belonging to Martham Boat Building & Development Co Ltd and at the same time took delivery of two 12ft mahogany sailing/pulling dinghies, which were sailed on the Broads River between Martham and Potter Heigham Bridge. These dinghies proved so very popular that the Group bought two more, bringing their total to four.

Skipper Eric Ebbage, the longstanding Group Scout Master, was so much taken by their sturdy construction that he set about designing a 20ft four-oared gig based on these 12ft dinghies. His view was that the existing two gigs owned by the Group were not a pair, so no good for competition; they were getting old and needed much repairs; the smaller Scouts in the Troop had difficulty rowing them

It was these considerations that lead to the final design in 1949. Both Mr Brown and Mr Davey, partners at MBB&D Co were persuaded to build two of Mr Ebbage's designed boats.

I've no idea of the cost but possibly around £500 each.

In 1974, I took over as Scout Leader. It was obvious to me that both boats needed major repairs – the effects of time and the use of both boats in a number of films. It was decided that they should go back to Martham to be rebuilt. It turned out that both gigs needed complete new planks, from five up from the keel, and new ribs, thwarts, (seat) and knees.

These were done in time for the Troop's Summer Camp at Martham in 1975. The cost then was £1200. Since that time, the old Scout Section have annually taken care of them by cleaning, painting and varnishing, but like all wooden boats, time and rot – affected by the chemicals in the river water - had taken their toll. Over the last 54 years, these boats have been used most weeks of the year, been to many Summer Camps, taken part in the Thames River Race, coming first place with the over-60 year section for the last seven years and again used for a couple of films.

Again the decision has been taken that these gigs need to be overhauled. One boat in particular is in a sorry state having developed a large hole in its bottom so once again it has been returned to MBB&D Co, now in the hands of the third family member – grandson to Mr Brown. In turn, they are delighted these boats still exist and are only too happy to undertake the necessary repairs. The cost this time is £3000 plus VAT, with 112ft of 5" planking, 22 new ribs and a new keel needed. These two gigs are unique and the envy of all Sea Scouts who see them We look forward to many more years of use by the Scouts of Leander. It is the opportunity to work as a boat's crew which has led to the Group being a leading Group in attaining the National Pulling Competition over the years.

*Gordon K. Biden
(Member since 1942,
Scout Leader 1974-1985).*

PS The construction is: oak keel and stem. Mahogany planks, transom, thwarts and knees with ash ribs, held together with copper nails and roves.

Cubs on the right track



The Cubs have all recently completed their Navigator badge. They had to go round the local area using different types of signs, find their way using maps and draw maps to help others.

During the last few months, they have also worked on the DIY badge, learning how to use saws, hammers, screwdrivers, even power tools. When they grow up, they should be able to keep the boats and the Headquarters ship-shape!



Three Cubs – Dominic Mellett, William Pearn and Hugh Walters – have now completed their Stage 4 Swimming badge. Among other things, they had to swim 800m without stopping (400m on their front and 400m on their back), swim 100m in under 4 minutes and tread water for five minutes. Well done!

Now that the better weather is with us, there will be more links with the Troop and some activities on the river with the Scouts.

Steve

Dates for your Diary

- April 14 – HQ Working Party:
*Ford, Foster, Freeman, Geraghty
- April 27 – St George's Day Parade, all sections, 2.20pm, Blagdon Road, New Malden
- April 27 – HQ Working Party:
*Goodall, Harrison, Hazard, Kersey
- May 11 – HQ Working Party: *King, Lafon, Lear, Lightfoot, Maguire
- May 15 – Leander AGM, with Thailand Jamboree talk by Ruth Osborne, 7.00pm at HQ
- June 8 – HQ Working Party:
*Manson, McDonagh, McGuinness, Mellett, Merridan
- June 22 – HQ Working Party:
*Mitchell, Osborne, Ozdilli, Paintin, Pearn
- July 6 – National Scout Regatta
- July 13 – HQ Working Party: *Peto, Pratt, Smith, Steele, Taylor

Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given for the Annual General Meeting of the Leander Sea Scout Group for the year 2002/2003, to be held at Group HQ, Lower Ham Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, on Thursday 15th May at 7.00pm.

Agenda

1. Welcome by the Chairman, Mr N Duffin.
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the 2001/2002 AGM – matters arising
4. Group Report by the GSL, Mr K Maund
5. Financial Report by the Honorary Treasurer, Mr G Goodall
6. Appointment of Officers to the Group Executive Committee
7. GSL's nominations to the Group Executive Committee
8. Election of additional members to the Group Executive Committee
9. Any Other Business
10. Close of Meeting