

THE WATER RAT

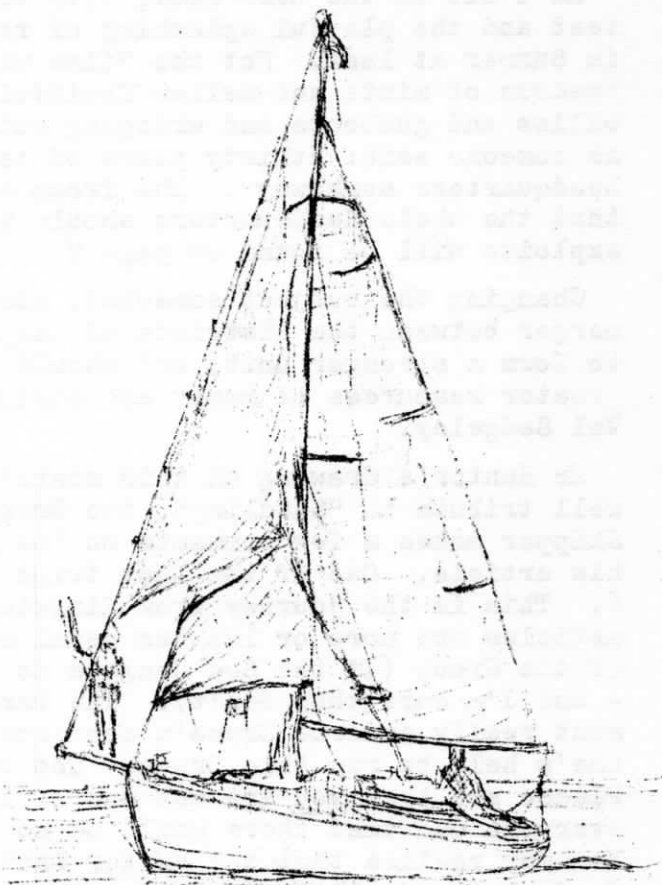
JULY 1967

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"SANDLING"

EDITORIAL.

As I sit in the Ward Room, with the sound of water gently lapping round my feet and the playful splashing of raindrops on the table, I realise that this is Summer at last. Not the "time when young men's fancies...." or the "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness", but the time for pitching tents in oilies and gumboots and wringing out the Ward Room carpets! Seriously though, as someone said: "thirty years of tealeaves have taken their toll on the Headquarters soakaway". The Troop are at the moment hard at work bailing so that the whole Headquarters should not be awash! Details of their further exploits will be found on page 7.

Changing the subject somewhat, most of you will know that there has been a merger between the districts of Kingston and Malden. This was done in order to form a stronger unit, and should benefit all concerned as there will be greater resources of money and equipment. The new District Commissioner is Val Sedgeley.

Mr Hunter's drawing on this month's frontispiece is in the nature of a farewell tribute to "Sandling", the Group's 6-ton cutter which has just been sold. Skipper makes a few comments on the past and future of the Group's boating in his article. One of the last trips in Sandling is described by Daisy on page 8. This is the journey from Kingston to Emsworth where she was sold. Other articles are more or less as usual with the reports from the various sections of the Group (if the Sea Rangers do not mind being included under this heading - and I'm sure they don't). The Parents' article is on page 5, and I think I must really endorse Bruno's comments in the recent "Lash Up": "We need everyone's help to run this Group. Too few people have done too much for too long. Please see that you are not one of those who say 'I can't turn up' for if everyone did that there would be no Scout Group for your son to belong to." You may realise that the "Water Rat" has been going for a considerable time. In fact the earliest issue I have seen was from 1933. These old copies always make fascinating reading - maybe the present issue will in 30 year's time - and there is an extract from a 1937 issue that shows that things don't change much, even in 30 years!

The next issue promises reports of all our Summer madness, but what about some articles ON TIME.

THE SKIPPER'S SCRAWL.

The cost of upkeep of the Group's 6-ton Auxiliary cutter "SANDLING" had become too heavy in both money and labour and the vessel has now been sold. This brings to a close another era in "Leander's" history. Until 1931 the boating activities of the members of the Scout Troop and Rover Crew were almost entirely restricted to the River Thames above Richmond. When the 16ft sloop "Hero" was purchased in that year, the Rovers were enabled to extend their cruising to the lower reaches of the river, and later to the Thames Estuary from Margate to Felixtowe. Except for the war years, this continued into the 1950s and resulted in an enormous increase in sea-faring knowledge and experience on the part of all of the senior members of the Group. With the advent of "Sandling" in 1955, a 3rd era commenced, and since then much further progress has been made and the limits of our cruising extended from Orfordness to Weymouth. There are probably few Sea Scout Groups in inland waters with our number of members having a sound knowledge of coastal cruising. The influence of this benefits the youngest Scouts, and provides an incentive for acquiring even the most elementary nautical skills as the first steps to qualifying for the wider adventures which become possible in due course. The reorganisation of the Scout Movement and its training programmes opens up a 4th era. "Leanders" must not lose their customary place in the van of progress, and the Group Council has appointed a Sub-Committee to investigate how "Sandling" can be replaced. Many will feel that we need a fast, modern vessel involving a minimum of time spent in upkeep, capable of being kept in commission for the greater part of the year, and suitable for both coastal and cross-channel cruising. A decision on this matter must be left to those who manage the Group's financial affairs. If they feel that such a project is possible, the utmost support of everyone connected with the Group will be needed.

Few weeks go by without one or more visitors turning up at H.Q. On 27th June, Scoutmaster Arthur Sondler, from Chicago, U.S.A., came to see how Sea Scouting is run in this part of the world. Some visitors are former members, who come no doubt to see if the old standards are being maintained. One such caller on a recent Saturday afternoon was Terry Milne, who joined the Scout Troop in April, 1949. Terry is now a Lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Navy, and when not at sea, lives at Boulderwood, in Nova Scotia. He was followed by Brian Wilson, who was with Leanders for several years from 1935. He was accompanied by his wife, Pam (née Hollis), whom many will remember as Cubmaster at the end of the War.

CUB NOTES

Having scraped off five Cubs going down the "up" escalator we arrived at the "Police and Road Safety" exhibition, whereupon they and I learned much-needed basic, even rudimentary, instruction on how to stay alive even though a pedestrian. They entered the Highway Code competition, and congratulations to the Michaels Wilson and Birtwhistle on winning a prize. We were in a District Soccer match afterwards, first of several during the season. All matches were played with a high standard of enthusiasm - especially by the Dads on the touch line - "Leander" didn't come anywhere in the league, though.

Mrs Baines, you were marvellous, thank you very much for spending so much time as pianist during February for the District Cub Concert. The boys did well in the sketch "Copy Cat" with two more in a double act; afterwards 23 qualified for the Entertainer's badge.

If you've never squelched mud through a tea strainer or looked into the mouth of a female Cyclops, you haven't lived. Spent the afternoon doing just that in March after seeing Graham Fouracre, Ian Knight, Ian Brooks, and Michael Fiskin "go-up" into the Troop. Bearing our haul back to the garden of H.Q., the Scouts and Venturers gave the Pack a really warm evening with a Barbecue and Campfire.

As I said to the Security Officer as they frisked us and M.I.5 confiscated my Brownie 127, "None of your aircraft is missing but the wings might just drop off" - we'd visited B.A.C. by kind invitation of Nick's Dad - Mr King. This was in April, when we also welcomed and invested Simon Mole, Alistair Bates, Timothy Cawdron, David Bevis, Andrew Wilson, and David Harrison.

Concentration in May was for the Good Turn - raising money for a Guide Dog for the Blind. Due to Con and Doug Hunter's terrific effort at organising a "Wine and Cheese" Party in their home, and the boys' selling pens at 1/- each we now have approx \$130 towards the total \$250 needed. **COMMERCIAL - PLEASE MAY WE HAVE CLEAN FOIL AND SILVER PAPER WHICH MUST BE KEPT SEPARATE.**

"It's perfectly alright to lay Ketchuped spaghetti end to end if you squirt each other with water and make kites, the trouble comes when you do Astronomy and it doesn't get dark" - conversation overheard outside Akela's/Raksha's marquee at Polyapes.

The idea was high minded - "If the Cubs make something themselves to sell at the fete they'll take more interest" - Sorry 'B' about the Port and Starboard footmarks in the Main Deck, but as someone said: "When you make Neopolitan Blobs you MUST watch where they put their feet. June was rounded off nicely with a nature trail on Rammore Common, and in July we're happily preparing to meet the LinzII Cub Scout Leader from Austria with whom we've corresponded for over two years.

Addressed variously as ARKAYLAR, ARKILER and OI!!, I thought it might be a good time to explain to the uninitiated why and who we all are, even tho' a "Rose" by any other name..... - which brings me to "BAGHEERA" (Black Panther), who is Rosemary Day; "BALOO" (Brown Bear), Monica Evans; "MOLE", Richard Conheeny; "RAKSHA" and "AKELA" (Wolves) - our title Wolf Cub has gone and emphasis on Kipling's "Jungle Story" is less but still used as a framework. The new look starts in earnest in October and all of us in Cub Scouting really look forward to the new Training Schemes.

PAT NEWMARCH - "AKELA"

PARENTS' PIECE.

The last issue of the "Water Rat" went to press shortly before the Group Parents' Coffee Evening, and although this is now rather distant history I think this is worth recording as a very successful event.

The object of the evening was to give parents, particularly of new Cubs, some idea of the sort of activities they could expect their boys to take part in with Leander. Displays and excellent photographs of Leander exploits had been arranged by the various divisions of the Group and these proved a great source of interest to the very large number of parents who came along. After coffee, the film of the Venture Scouts' camp on the Isle of Arran in 1966 was screened and was supported by a very well produced commentary complete with aptly selected musical background. A very slick production worthy of the Rank - if not the file. A Gilwell film of bombhole mudslinging was the supporting attraction together with a tape, recorded as a Christmas greeting from the Austrian Scouts who visited Leander during the Summer. After the entertainment

the various officers of the Parents' Association and the Group each gave a short talk on their work in Leander, and we had a general discussion and inspection of H.Q. All in all it proved a very successful and enjoyable evening and although it was not intended to extract any finance from the visitors, a raffle produced the sum of £9.10.0 which was equally divided between the Cub Guide Dog Appeal and the District Jamboree Fund.

The first fund raising effort of the year was the Jumble Sale which was again a surprising success - it is incredible where all the stuff comes from, and even more incredible where it goes!

The next activity in the year's programme was a Social and A.G.M. at the Tudor Hall on 28th April. In contrast to the coffee evening this was very poorly attended and it does appear that Socials are not in favour at present. Any ideas for an alternative? As far as the A.G.M. was concerned, the accounts included a major item of £156 for the purchase of three dinghies and we looked forward hopefully that such a large sum would not be required for any one item during the present year, but the urgent need for the purchase of a new van and the replacement of camp gear lost at sea means a really all-out effort at fund-raising is going to be required this year.

The day after the Social we travelled to Polyapes where, at the request of the Polyapes Committee, we had been asked to arrange teas for some 250+ V.I.P.'s and other guests attending the official opening of the new Training Hut. This was quite an operation which was carried out without a major hitch, and we should like to thank the many parents and friends who gave their time to this very worthwhile cause.

Finally we have just dried out after the Summer Fete! It was unfortunate that the first drop of rain coincided with the official opening, but undaunted stall-holders and money-spenders carried on, and I think we were surprised that it went off so well. The profit made was over £110, which in the circumstances reflects credit on all concerned, and we are grateful for the support we had not only from our regular helpers but also from many who helped for the first time. I hope they will not be discouraged. Never mind, let's aim for £200 from the Bazaar.

JACK CRUMP

Much of great interest and importance has happened Troop-wise since the last issue of the "Water Rat", and avid readers or those with a thirst for intellectual stimulation are referred to the "Lash Up", that learned journal. We are pleased to welcome its resurrection at the beginning of this year, firstly under Mac, and then, on his promotion to higher service (as District Information Officer), under Peter.

In January, we managed to take third place in the District Cross Country Race, together with some high individual placings, including Peter Marshall, who won the under-12 event.

In May, we set out with our hopes high for the Greater London Sea Scout Regatta at Cheshunt. Kim won the under-15 sculling over the stern, and Blondy the under-16 sculling; in fact, he had so much time to spare that he was able to stand up and pose for photographs during the race!

We camped at Longridge over the Spring Holiday weekend, and Bruno took his usual "large" weather with him. However, after the violent thunderstorm on the first night, the weekend turned out quite a scorcher and we made good use of the site boats.

In the District Swimming Gala recently the team did very well to win the Scout Trophy, with a particularly good effort from Philip, who seemed to spend more time in the water than out.

The Royal Canoe Club invited us to compete in a couple of races during their regatta the other Saturday; unfortunately there was not a great deal of support, but Seamus and Jonathan came away with mugs (No comment).

Despite the ever increasing pressure of schoolwork and exams at this time of year all the Patrols have managed a weekend camp although some of the younger members did not attend as we had hoped. Also two Second Class badges have been gained recently by Seamus and Dominic, and Peter Lawson, Graham Fouracre, Michael Fishen, and Ian Brooks have been invested. It's a pity these are oases in a desert of rather less keenness to gain badges!

It is good to see Bruno back in circulation, if not completely so, after his recent spell in Kingston Hospital. We hope to see him at Summer Camp when we are marooning the Troop in the middle of Poole Harbour.

SANDLING SAGA.

The last two weeks of May passed for "Sandling" in a shower of rain, tarpaulins, white paint, and hot words. On Saturday 27th May at 2250 she left H.Q. bound for Chichester with Nye, Mole, Beefy, Daisy, Bug, and Ricky Stone aboard. The trip downriver was eventful in itself, the Skipper and Mate showed great restraint in not throwing themselves over the side when we momentarily ran aground in the Thames but merely muttered: "We are well and truly back on board." They returned to the task of repairing leaks in the cooking pots and stoves, things that occur five minutes before they are thought of.

The mast was stepped at Greenwich Pier under the watchful eye of the pier-master and we were well and truly under way in the lower reaches of the Thames when the engine was stopped and the sails were hoisted. We quickly fell into the system of watches of 4 hours on and 4 hours off for one watch. The wind was SE and Margate was passed in the early evening. The night was spent tacking round South Foreland and past Ramsgate, but due to an adverse tide we anchored for the duration of one watch almost exactly. (The fact that it was the navigator's watch has nothing to do with it!) On weighing anchor a spreader fell on Mole and this affected him so much that he spent his afternoon watch sitting in the Main Cabin surrounded by woodshavings and tools mending it.

By now we had passed Dover and were heading for Dungeness, but looking at the stack of food we decided to anchor off Dynechurch and cooked a meal of chops, instant whip, rhubarb, and red paint - according to one source. It had been a good day's sailing and most of the afternoon had been spent sailing in the company of a 5-ton cutter just a little faster than us.

After shipping the spreader we were under way again by evening and past Dungeness point about 11.30. At this point the sky was so black that it was impossible to discern the sky from the sea. The sea was alive with phosphorescent plankton, and the light was bright enough to cause reflections on the white topside. The whole sea appeared green where the waves broke, and the wake caused by the centreplate and the rudder was clearly defineable deeper in

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the water. When it rained the whole sea appeared alive. In the morning we passed Beachy Head in a deluge of hail squalls. This excited the navigator to furiously navigate with the sextant and radio and inform the crew that they were off Beachy Head.

Brian and Ricky had to return to Kingston on the Tuesday, so we anchored off Seaford and while the Mate found a decently indecent pair of jeans to wear Mole rowed them ashore.

In the early evening we weighed anchor and set off on the final stage. In the late evening a red parachute flare was seen astern of us and a minesweeper in the area left to investigate. The night was spent sailing in company with minesweepers on sweeping exercises so close you could see the cigarettes alight on the bridge! The wind was light but by the morning we passed the Owers light vessel and altered course for Chichester, and unfortunately had to start the engine, stop it, start it, etc. Beefy proceeded to dismantle the engine fuel system under the guiding words of three foremen. The petrol pipe was found to be blocked. We dropped anchor just to the West of Chichester and proceeded to eat and clean ship, no mean task after four days at sea - the cleaning that is. At 1500 we weighed anchor, and armed with various pilotage books proceeded to cross the sand bar across the harbour entrance. On reaching Emsworth, after slowly digesting the presence of thousands of pounds' worth of yachts moored en route, we were accosted by a gentleman in a motor boat who guided us to the yacht basin. In true style we came to rest in a mud channel outside the basin and had to wait for half an hour for the tide to rise so that we had enough water to enter.

We arrived alongside at 1730 and made Sandling fast after what was, we all felt, a very enjoyable and instructive experience. It is trips like these that provide the conditions for training people in responsibility and seamanship to a more realistic and practical degree.

(Note: the author would like to thank the makers of Plastic Padding, without which this trip would have been a hungry one!)

DAISY.

NEWS FROM THE S.R.S. VICTOR MARRIAGE BUREAU!

As usual the writing of this highly intersting article is preceeded by the Editor making pleas at $\frac{1}{2}$ weekly intervals for its completion. The number of Rangers stays steadily in the region if 18. Now to tell you a few of the exciting things we have been doing.

A few weeks ago on a Monday evening, we had a trip down to the lock, and had a massive fry-up. This was the reason we only went as far as the lock, they were all so full-up afterwards it would have been impossible to row further. On our return we found distraught parents waiting at H.Q. for their daughters.

Wendy and Hilary have created the main attraction of the last few months. On April 1st (very significant) Hilary married Keith at St Peter's Norbiton, and Wendy married David at a tiny little church in Chessington. Both brides looked absolutely gorgeous.

In May, Suzette Juniper came from New York to marry Michael Newman, but sadly for us returned to America immediately afterwards. We all wish her the very best and hope to see her fairly often, well, at least nearly every year.

Three other Rangers have become engaged. Jenny, Marilyn, and Chris Abnett, who joined the Wrens last year.

Chris and Sonja have been down to visit us whilst on leave. They seem to be enjoying the Wrens immensely. Jane, who joined a while after, has not been down yet.

Sad news about Viv who left the Rangers about a year ago. She had a nasty accident in which she was knocked down by a scooter and very badly concussed. Viv's right arm was broken and she hit her head, but she now seems to be recovering fairly quickly. We hope she will come to Rangers for a little light entertainment as she will not be able to read for six weeks. Eddy has lost a stone in weight, it's a pity it wasn't one of us!

About $\frac{1}{2}$ dozen Rangers went on a canoeing instruction weekend at Thames Young Mariners. They all enjoyed it immensely.

More exciting happenings in the next edition. Don't miss it.

MARION.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

- August 12-26th Troop Summer Camp at Arne, near Wareham, Dorset.
- September 16/17th District Camping Competition at Polyapes.
 23/24th County Camping Competition (perhaps!)
 30th/Oct. 1st National Sea Scout Regatta at Kingston. This promises to be as big, if not bigger, than previous years, so we will need another big effort from all our Parents and Friends.
- November 18th Group Bazaar at the Tudor Hall. Let's see you there manning a stall or spending your money!

THEN AS NOW?

Extracts from the "Water Rat" 30 years ago.

Shipwreck (Oct 1937)

On Saturday evening 17th April some of the younger Scouts of our Troop took the small gig out. There was a very fast stream of flood-water running down.

The boat turned opposite Turk's and went towards Kingston Bridge, trying to pass between the islands. The stream was too strong, however, and carried us onto the small island. There was a nasty crash, and water began to pour in through a big hole in the side. The cox called "Get ashore quickly", which we did, some of us with wet feet. The gig did not sink and Paul Clements took it back, returning with a dinghy to take us off and collect the oars. That was my first shipwreck in the Sea Scouts, and the Mate says it will have to be the last!

R. STEPHENSON.

Auntie Muriel (Oct 1937)

I hear rumours of Sea Rangers wishing to use "leander" Headquarters. Ah, well, girls will be boys, won't they?

LEANDER ROUND UP

Once again the Group held a successful Swimming Gala organised by the Guild this year in May. As usual there was a large number of entries from all sections of the Group, and it was good to see over 20 Cubs entered for the 1 length freestyle.

The Cubs also showed their style at the District Swimming Gala, when Leander Pack was placed equal second with Rokeby School Pack. The Troop and the Venture Scout Unit, not to be outdone, won their sections.

Some of the parents and friends of the Group have been waging war in the back garden! Waging war on the 6 ft high stinging nettles, that is; also levelling off the car park. It's a pity that it is always the same faces that one sees on any such occasion.

The Venture Scouts are, at the time of publication, somewhere between Boulogne and Ramsgate returning from a cross-channel cruise in a fibreglass gig. Over a dozen boats from Sea Scout Groups all over the South of the country took part and the trip was escorted by Royal Naval vessels. They were due to attend several civic receptions whilst in France.

I hear that on Saturday afternoon as well as being a Duty Patrol there is now a "Drain Patrol" whose sole purpose is to cover the Headquarters in mud and sludge which they are emptying from the scullaway. It is reported that sales of bath soap in Kingston have rocketed during the past few weeks. Still, never mind, only another 29½ years' tealeaves to go!

See letter in Lash Up Vol 7 No.4 !?!

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LOOSE ENDS?

From the July Parish magazine of All Saints' Church, Loose, in Kent:
 "Midsummer Fayre It was sad that the Scout aerial runway for the children did not materialise and we hope Mr Norman Wallis will be out of hospital by the time this magazine is published."

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