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T H E W A T E R R A T * * * *

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EDITORIAL

As I write this it is Twelfth Night and so the celebrations of Christmas are now officially over. As a last fling, the frontispiece of this issue is in a festive vein. It is a copy of the Frontispiece of December 1937, a reminiscence of over thirty years ago.

Skipper makes a brief survey of the year's activities within the Group in his article on the facing page. For me, one of the most commendable efforts which has continued throughout the year has been the Cubs' unflinching money raising for their Guide Dog Appeal. One must remark, of course that Pat Newmarch has always been the driving force behind this, and it has not been one of the schemes that start with a big flash and soon fizzle out but has persevered for many years under her guidance. The fund has recently received a boost of about £30 (it is hoped) from the Scouts and Venture Scouts who undertook a "Charity Row" for the purpose, and were sponsored by their friends and relatives. Believe me, rowing 38 miles in the middle of winter is no joke!

Unfortunately, the layout of this issue is not up to the usual standard - there seemed to be too much for 10 pages and too little for 12! Alast minute spot of forgetfulness had me writing the title "Venture Scouts" backward on the stencil in situ!

Belated Best Wishes for the New Year to all readers.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

March 23rd	Group Jumble Sale
April 12th-25th	Easter weekend. Expedition for Troop Patrol Leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders. Venture Scout Greenhithe-and-back Challenge Gig Race.
June 29th	Fete '68.
August 10th-24th	Troop Summer Camp at Chidham near Chichester.

The commencement of a new year is the time when most firms take stock of their assets and I suppose nearly all of us do some mental stock-taking. Older people tend to look backwards and review the happenings of the past, often with the result of realising how far what has been accomplished has fallen short of their aspirations. On the other hand the more youthful members of society look forward with high hopes to spectacular achievements in the future. In this way they are encouraged by a growing sense of ability and strength. Whilst I trust that all of us in Scouting are young enough, at least in mind, to indulge in this latter exercise, it is worth while briefly to survey some of the Group's activities during 1967.

In all sections of the Group, steady progress has been made in the normal training programme, which of course provides the backbone of our Scout life. Apart from this, numerous expeditions, cruises and camps have been undertaken, not without some mishaps, I regret to say, but valuable lessons have been learned. International friendships have been fostered by visits to Austria and France, and many memorable experiences have been gained. The National Sea Scout Regatta again enabled the Group to demonstrate its prowess in the actual events and, by the manner in which all kinds of people associated with the Group rallied round providing hospitality for a host of visiting competitors, it earned high praise from all concerned. Throughout the year, the backing of the Parents' Association and Guild of Old Scouts has not only safe-guarded our finances but has been the source of invaluable encouragement to the Scouters in their work on behalf of the boys.

In looking to the future with its NEW LOOK, both in uniforms and proficiency tests, etc., we must not lose sight of the OLD LANDMARKS. We must keep the OUT in our SCOUTING and here, as Sea Scouts we have the

4. great advantage that in our contact with the wind and sea, we are brought face to face with the wonders of creation and so to our Duty to God. This, as interpreted in the Scout Law, is the fundamental basis of all our undertakings. Incidentally we learn that the OUT also involves an outward look towards other people. To think of others and to forget our selfish desires is probably the world's greatest need in this day and age.

Cissie joins me in wishing all "leanders" and friends a Happy and Rewarding New Year.

WHAT'S CUBBING ANYWAY ?

To stand -

purple with cold admiring "ours" five v. "theirs" eleven,

To discover

THEY are "at home", not you,

So what do you do with hopes not of heaven,

Twelve quartered oranges, spare ref, ball and whistle too.

To keep -

a balloon under your legs and balance an egg on your head,

To float

on your back for a length at the barfs,

To be met with your asthmatic inhaler and half-dead

And told "well you TRIED and it's only for larfs".

To try -

and hitch hike wearing your new fore and aft

Whilst looking for the two who should be with the other twenty eight

To be told

"I'm not helping no traffic warden who's daft"

To remember

there were only eight and twenty when counted at the gate.

To interview -
 a future man-like Cub,
 To be told
 "Bank of England" for religious belief
 (To feel lik saying - "Welcome to the Club"
 But to know that innocence will be all too brief).

To "Plan Ahead" -
 a "group", hammer, paint, and make
 Musical sessions, rehearse bangs plus oral,
 Pow wham ke-pow thud "Deckhands" earth quake
 THEN PREMIERE HIT BY POX and quarters our choral.

To notice -
 twelve ears intent on a yarn of Noah and his Ark,
 Six mouths take over to act out of sight,
 To hear
 "I'm God, what shall I do today?" may sound stark,
 And for Noah to say "Hullo God"! but for eight years old it's right.

THAT'S CUBBING

by a Cub Scout Leader.

PARENTS' CORNER

Since the last Water Rat when we were recovering from the National Sea Scout Regatta we have mostly been concerned with the Christmas Bazaar which this year we called the "LEANDER MARKET".

The Tudor Hall has limitations on space so on this occasion we tried out a system of joining our "prefabricated" stalls back to back to form a central shopping area in the middle of the hall with the gift stall facing prospective customers as they came in the door. In addition we

6. used each corner of the room and were able to provide space for the Cubs' Stall and Christmas Cards. All in all, the event went off very well and we found that the new layout resulted in a steady circulation of visitors and also looked attractive.

In an effort to encourage visitors not connected with Leander, a printed invitation containing some amusing illustrations by Bill Williamson was produced, and 2,500 copies were distributed to houses in the vicinity of the Tudor Hall. Although it is difficult to assess the results, there is no doubt that quite a few people were casual visitors unconnected with the Group. Anyway they all helped by spending to swell the pot to £110.

We hope to arrange a meeting early in the new year to start planning for 1968. The Group Jumble Sale is to be held on 23rd March and the Summer Fete on 29th June. For the latter "do" which is to be called Fete '68 we have been fortunate in obtaining permission to use the grounds of Rivermead School. However, with such a large field to cope with it will be essential that we have lots of stalls, lots of sideshows, and bags of new ideas. May your son rely on your help - because that is whom everyone is helping.

JACK CRUMP.

TROOP NEWS

In an adventurous mood, Jonathan, Drewsle, Ant and Simon were chauffeured to the Stepping Stones in the middle of the night, and made a raft there out of rope, oil drums and poles, to float down to Leatherhead, a distance of about 4 miles. They went quite happily to start with so Jonathan decided to liven the trip up with a few bangers, but the trip soon became more eventful when they were confronted with a weir. After that had been left behind, Drewsle's oil drum came loose, and when it ranned the bank came adrift, and the occupant was left floundering in the water.

As a result of the Patrol Leaders' decision a new scheme for Saturday

programmes is being tried: two Patrols go out and two stay at the H.Q. 7.
For their outing the Beavers have been to the Ice Rink, hiked from Leith Hill to Box Hill, and toured the Docks, Woolwich and Greenwich on a Red Rover. The Seagulls have been canoeing along the Hogsmill and tobogganing in Richmond Park. The Herons have cycled to London Airport and also toured London on a Red Rover. The Storks have been on a cycle trip and also completed a Red Rover tour to the South Kensington Museums, etc.

Several informed activities have been organised, including the building of a large catapult and a Charity Row. The catapult was built on the Sturday before Christmas and was used for hurling bricks onto the waste land beside the H.Q. The Charity Row to help buy a Guide Dog for the blind was supposed to be from Marlow to Kingston (36 miles) but, because of the foot and mouth, it was from Kingston to Woolwich to "Discovery" (38 miles). This is hoped to raise about £30.

SIMON

S.R.S. VICTOR

The Sea Ranger Regatta at the beginning of October comes to mind first of all. We had gone hoping to bring the cup back with us but soon realised this was not to be; admittedly we could have rowed, pulled, etc. a little harder, but since we were prevented, through no fault of our own, from entering one race, we left feeling rather disappointed. Owing to the efforts of three "Valiant Venturers", Mole, Archie, and Bug, Victor won the mixed gig race, and afterwards (according to tradition) the cox (Bug) took a dip in the cool, refreshing Thames. Did he cause a sensation with the Sea Rangers on the bank!

The last boating achievement of the season to be gained was Marilyn's boating permit. The Saturday morning she took it was extremely cold and her hardy crew thoroughly expected the river to freeze over. However, after repeating "man overboard" and various other manoeuvres about a dozen times, all raced back to the beautifully warm galley to make that blessed liquid - otherwise known as coffee.

(continued over)

8. Over the past few months we have been having various speakers at our Monday meetings. Nye instructing us in navigation soon found that there was a considerable amount to teach us but nevertheless we persevered; Mr and Mrs Dow showed us how to make attractive Christmas table centres; and lastly a friend of Wendy's gave us some new and unusual ideas for wrapping Christmas presents, then throwing some run-of-the-mill paper around gifts. We thank all these visitors for giving up their time to be with us.

SUSAN ROBERTS

VENTURE SCOUTS.

We have been busy since pen was last put to paper so here are the events in order. At the National Sea Scout Regatta the Venture Scouts helped the Group to come 2nd in the Gala, and retained the Gig Pulling Trophy for the second year. Following this was the District Venture Night Hike in which two teams were entered. They came 7th and 9th; as the course was difficult, the judges forcibly stopped us and no-one finished. Next came the County Swimming Gala at the Shell Centre. Archie won the two lengths back crawl and Bug, Philip, Gordon and Archie won the relay. There was a film evening to encourage new members i.e. each Venture Scout brought down a friend. We added Philip Smith to Gordon Graham who had just come up, and both increased our ranks.

Then comes our driving experience. As Nye dislikes Barbara (Castle) he increased her worries by taking the entire unit to some woods and letting us drive his Land Rover. Someone disliked Nye and bent his bumper - it was straightened with a block and tackle. After the Admiralty Inspection there was a Sunday spent climbing at Harrison's Rocks which was enjoyed by all.

Since then we have had our Christmas outing around London to see "A Man for All Seasons" and our Christmas Dinner.

So an overdue Happy New Year to everyone from the Officer Commanding Propaganda!

BRIAN LEYSHON.

REPORT TO ADMIRAL COMMANDING RESERVES.

9.

I inspected Kingston (Leander) Sea Scouts at Group Headquarters, Lower Ham Road, Kingston-on-Thames on Thursday 23rd November at 1930.

From the initial introduction to Commissioners, 'Elders', Leaders and instructors to an overall glance at the parade I was aware of a quiet balance and confidence of the mature unit, and everything following supported this impression.

The Parade and Inspection of Patrols was well controlled except for slight head movement in the centre, on completion all hands cleaned into No.8 uniform (all marked with names). Despite darkness all boats were manned (Some 16, from canoes to 20ft fibreglass gigs). I was conducted around the various projects, Outboard servicing, a cliff abseil practice, wire splicing, films, mouth to mouth display with dummy, and more. I was impressed with the substantial workshops, storerooms, the excellent surveillance from the 'Bridge' of all water activity. By any standards the group is lavishly equipped.

Kingston have clearly profitted from the stimulus of host to past Scouting regattas, I feel membership is sought after and they can afford to be selective.

The inspection was attended by G.Davidson Esq., A.C.C. and V.Sedgeley Esq. D.C.

Since the last inspection, the following awards have been made:-
Second Class...10, First Class...2, Seamans Badge...1, in addition, 14 nautical proficiency badges have been gained.

A very good inspection, I strongly recommend continuance of Royal Naval Recognition.

(signed) A.F. GINN
Lieutenant Commander R.N.

OUR SIDE OF THE INSPECTION

As usual, this took place on a cold, damp, windless November evening (really it just seems like that - the last one was in June) and this year we had a new Inspecting Officer - Lt. Cmdr. Ginn. Various rumours about the fiery treatment we were likely to receive had been heard, and, true to form, on the stroke of 1950 hrs a roar came from the end of the Main Deck and the Troop visibly braced themselves for the expected onslaught. However the onslaught rapidly changed to a fairly typical inspection, enlivened by the questions put to most of the Scouts. Lt. Cmdr. Ginn looked a bit surprised on meeting two Patricks and a Seanus in one Patrol (they are all English). One look at the V.S.U. (Venture Scout Unit to the ignorant) was enough to make him decide not to ask them anything. (why? ask any Venture Scout.)

Both the V.S.U. and the Troop went out in various boats and canoes (fifteen altogether) but for at least the seventh consecutive Admiralty Inspection the wind was little more than force 0 (smoke rises vertically) After seeing the V.S.U. at work on splicing wire rope and overhauling an outboard, he then spent several minutes asking those who were doing the chartwork various questions. (At least they knew spring tides occur every fortnight.)

Somewhat the official programme got slightly altered, so that it was all too easy to open a door and find oneself facing the Inspecting Officer and his retinue, but this did not, of course, prevent various activities taking place, including abseiling (a sophisticated method of sliding down a rope), artificial respiration practice on Resusci-Annie (a lady known to many readers) and meteorology.

Finally we all mustered in the Main Deck for the sunning up. This was generally very favourable, although the shallowness of knowledge on a few aspects of some of the activities was hinted at.

Leander has now successfully completed over twenty Admiralty Inspections, and has been one of the hundred Admiralty Qualified Units since the scene was inaugurated during the last war.

PETER.