



# THE WATER RAT

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"LEANDER" (KINGSTON) SEA SCOUT GROUP

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## SKIPPER'S SCRAWL

Firstly, a warm welcome to Chris Stotesbury who is taking over as Beaver Leader and also to Lucy from Sea Rangers, joining Louise as an assistant. At present, we have 17 boisterous Beavers, five of whom I was pleased to invest last Monday evening - once the papier mache had been cleaned from hands and faces! I'm sure the Beavers can look forward to an interesting and varied programme with Chris. However, we still need an adult assistant before we can take in any more boys to this section, so please let Chris of myself know if you can help on a regular basis.

As stated in the last edition's Stop Press, the Admiralty Inspection was passed with flying colours. The Inspecting Officer spoke to all the Boys and watched activities by beavers and Cubs before going to the river bank to see the Scouts boating activities. The Boys demonstrated canoeing, rowing, anchoring, tug of war in rowing boats, a first aid incident and finished off with water polo in canoes. Visiting us for the inspection were the District Commissioner, the Kingston Principal Youth Officer and a representative from the Kingston Rotary Club. The evening finished with the presentation of the Chief Scouts Award to Andy King and David Leader after which the Inspecting Officer complimented the boys on their achievements and standards of seamanship, recommending that Leander continue as one of the 100 Sea Scout Group in the Country whose standards meet recognition requirements.

Attached to last months issue was a "Help Sheet". Thanks to the 3 parents and 2 supporters who completed a returned the form. To the other 90 sent out - I would like to jog your memories!!.

AS YET, WE HAVE NOT HAD ANY VOLUNTEERS TO TAKE OVER AS CUB LEADER. REGRETABLY, IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO CLOSE CUBS UNTIL A NEW LEADER CAN BE FOUND.

At a recent meeting with Cub Parents, I explained the fact that without a uniformed leader present at meetings, insurance is invalid. Whereas I am most grateful to those parents who have helped at meetings since September, together with the 2 Scout PLs - Martin & William - this has only given us temporary respite since from December, I shall not be able to provide uniformed leader cover for Cub meetings myself, due to business commitments.

At present, we have 27 cubs and with this number of boys we really need at least two Adult Uniformed Leaders, as well as the other helpers. This could be anyone age 21-65 - male or female - who are prepared to become uniformed, warranted leaders. I must therefore again stress the importance of finding volunteers for Cub Leaders. Please let me know if you, or anyone else you know, can help in this respect. (Tel: 081-399 5846).

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Thanks to Mrs Baldwin and Mrs Chapman who raised £140 for our funds at the Car Boot Sale. This equates well with what we used to raise at a Jumble Sale and I hope it can be repeated later in the year or next year.

Again, thanks to the help of the parents and supporters, the Halloween and Firework evening proved a success - not only did we all have an enjoyable evening, it also made a profit of some £6.

Those who attended, will have noted that thanks to Mr Laws work and the Social Club funding, the Galley Store is now almost fitted out with work tops and units and as soon as this is done, the floor is due to be tiled. At the time of writing, I have just returned from the H.Q. where 16 ton of ballast and 40 bags of cement have just been delivered. Weather permitting, I hope tomorrow a start can be made on concreting the access from Albany Mews and finishing the ramp up to the building. If the mixing isn't finished, stand by for a phone call for help next weekend as we won't be able to store the cement for too long!

Finally, Marion Duffin has advised me that 47 of the 50 places for the Group Dinner on 16th January have been booked. Could those attending please let Marion have their cheques (£8.00 per person) in the next week or two - cheques payable to Mrs M Duffin - and sent direct to her at 17 Arthur Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 6BA.

KEITH MAUND - GSL

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FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF A BEAVER LEADER

By a mysterious process, I have become the leader of Leander Beavers. How has this happened? Perhaps it is in the genes - my father was a Scout Master (before I was born). My son has just joined Beavers, so I knew they needed a Leader. I had expressed a vague interest; the next Saturday, shopping in Kingston, I met two separate people who said "I hear you are taking over Beavers"! How could I resist? So here I am.

A first impression is that 18 Beavers have about 18 times the energy of 1 son. So it's a bit like a whirlwind. I am told that Beavers like messy activities. I can confirm that making papier mache masks is a messy activity, so we won't be doing that every week.

We are lucky in having two Sea Rangers, Louise and Lucy, helping regularly. I hope that with plenty of assistance from parents we shall have lots of fun together.

CHRIS STOTESBURY

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UP THE MEDINA!

Sunday started at 5.30am!! It was dark and I awoke to see dim drips of condensation threatening me about 12 inches above my nose. I could hear a gentle droning of one of my companions happily snoring his way through the night. I became gradually aware of my surroundings and remembered where I was. I was aboard the good ship Annabella, a four berth sailing yacht belonging to Michael Fletcher, known to us as Cyril.

"Captain Fletcher" of Leander Guild had agreed to take a fellow sailor Keith Maund (Group Scout Leader) together with two complete novices, Mick Chinnock (Chief) and myself Mike Baker (Bosun) along on a sailing weekend.

Three of us drove down to the boat mooring at Hardway Sailing Club on 22nd September which was a Saturday. We travelled in Keith's car and arrived about 11am where Cyril met us. He showed us around the Hardway Sailing Club, where we had lunch, and he told us of the practise that was followed where each member and family took responsibility for running the bar and kitchen for one weekend each year, or they paid £25 for the pleasure of not doing it - should we adopt this idea for the Leander Sunday Teas????!!!!

After lunch we boarded the "Annabella" and made ready to sail at about 2pm. We cast off and made our way towards the Solent, through the harbour mouth. This was done with the aid of an engine as it was not permitted to sail within the mouth of the harbour in case of collision with large ferries and other naval vessels, one of which was the Ark ROyal.

As we left the harbour the sails were set - the main and foresail were hoisted. We tacked first South, then North making our way along the Solent towards Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight. There was a very stiff breeze and the seas was reasonably choppy and when we had covered three-quarters of the journey, we were hit suddenly by a Force 8 gale.

The sailing from here became exhilarating to say the least. Mick and I were sitting leaning against the sail of the boat which by now was a very peculiar angle to the sea and without moving we found ourselves standing with the sea rushing over our feet. We still had hold of our coffees and Mick and I exchanged views that this was a bit hairy! However, we were not concerned as we felt in good hands.

Our calmness slightly evaporated when we looked at the faces of both Keith and Cyril and realised that this was not quite as normal as we had thought.

I watched in amazement as Cyril had enough hands to wind in sails, steer the boat, hold his cup of coffee and yet he still had another hand ready to hold his sailing cap in place!!!

At that very moment we heard a May Day call from another yacht and we decided to turn back towards our anchorage which was to be up the Medina River.

Here we ate a delicious chicken casserole provided by Mrs Fletcher and we joined many other sailors for a drink in the local pub before retiring to our berths for a well earned sleep.

The next morning weather conditions were much improved and we sailed without incident to Yarmouth and then back into Portsmouth Harbour from whence we travelled home to arrive about 7pm.

We all got on very well and I am sure I am correct in saying that we all enjoyed ourselves. It was a wonderful new experience for both Mick and I and all three of us would like to express our thanks to Cyril for the opportunity to act as his crew.

MICHAEL BAKER (Bosun)

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Summer Camp was only just over three months ago and so much has happened. As soon as we got back to Scouts we had the Great River Race, that long, arduous row of 22 miles along the Thames. The boys did well and overtook the Fulwell Management Crew at great speed. We do not know how well they did, but understand that they were well placed in their class.

As soon as the River Race was over, we had to get down to work for the Admiralty Inspection. We decided to do a variety of exercises which included anchoring, heaving a line and rescuing someone from across the river. Lorrie took some boys canoeing and ended up playing boat polo. I am pleased to say that Commander Scott was very impressed and we kept our Admiralty recognition.

It was also on this night that Bosun (Mike Baker) took over from Chief as Scout Leader.

It was a proud moment for David Leader and Andy King as they were presented with their Chief Scout Awards by Chris Feltham.

Since then we have welcomed three new boys, Stephen Warrington, Marty Barrington and Martin Tucker. We have also been working hard doing lots of badge work and many have been awarded.

Some of the boys have been working towards their canoeing 2\* Award.

Our latest expedition was the Night Hike (14th-15th November) which was around the Leith Hill area. It started out dry and then started to rain and it did not stop. The boys strated off with lots of hope but soon lost their way due to bad weather conditions. We entered three teams - 2 senior and 1 junior. The two senior teams were led by Leo Gould (PL) and Charles Sealey (APL) and Tom King (PL) and Martin Connolly (APL). The junior team was led by William Steenthal and Ryan as (APL). They continued until around 2am when the weather became so bad that the Hike was stopped. The boys got back to Polyapes around 2.30 and then to sleep.

At the Rememberance Service on 8th November, Bosun and myself had the honour of escorting the wreath laid by Kingston Scouts.

It only remains for me to say that we wish Bosun all the success in the future months with the programme and running of the troop.

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RANGER REPORT

After a week spent at Rose Cottage, we also started back in September with the Great River Race. We completed the course in just over 4 hours and Vera Corner Halligan coxed the crew.

Mrs Sangster then announced her retirement in November so we started working toward getting all the old Rangers together again. We also started getting together lots of old photos. Our Crew Party and Mrs Sangster's Retirement were on 7th November. The Rangers spent all of the Friday night and Saturday afternoon decorating the H.Q. The food table was wonderful and the cake depicted our Ships Badge and four scenes of activities we undertake. There were a lot of VIPs including Billy Macdonald the President of the Sea Ranger Association, the Vice President Eleanor Horn and many of Mrs Sangster's old friends. We managed to contact about 70 of the old Sea Rangers and about 50 attended. We presented Mrs Sangster with three prints and she also received various other gifts. All of the girls, past and present, wish to thank Mrs Sangster for all that she has done for all Sea Rangers.

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PARENT POWER

We are actively trying to form a Fund Raising Committee/Group made up from parents of the various groups that make Leander.

Would anyone interested in joining such a venture please contact Sarah Barnard on 081-546 7371.

THIS GROUP IS VITAL TO THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF LEANDER TO SERVE YOUR CHILDREN.

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