



The Water Rat

Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

July 1999

Skipper's Scrawl

Thanks to everyone who made the Regatta this year on 4th July such a success, both competitors and those who helped with the organisation. Robin, as always, did a lot of preparatory work on boats and equipment and John Clark was on his usual 'Morning Watch' (4 bells) laying the course to a high precision. In the competition, the Venture Scouts were second overall and the Scouts third, against strong competition of the best Sea Scout groups in the country. Jan Wileman and her team of parents raised about £140 from catering.

In the week before the Regatta, one of our new fibreglass gigs was launched and named 'Chief' in his honour. Jen Chinnock was able to be present and was taken for an inaugural row by a Venture Scout crew.

Back in May, Rob Barnard organised a team of parents catering at the Ham Fair and made about £400 – a splendid effort, thanks to you all.

When you go down to the Headquarters, you will notice the riverbank is much improved for launching boats thanks mostly to Chris Osborne who did the necessary shuttering and laying of the concrete, assisted by Mike Freeman.

Nigel Duffin and I dropped in to visit the Troop in camp at Downe, near Biggin Hill in Kent, last weekend. Not that the Scouts were to be seen for very long – far too busy with all the activities that the site had to offer. After the Summer we start with a big event, the Great River Race, and Leander has five crews entered – under 14, under 15½, Venture Scout, Guild and Parents (whipped into a peak of fitness by Tim Pearce and Ian Chappell). Remember

to get started as soon as possible getting sponsors – September 5th is not very far away!

We had advertised a date in September for the 1998/99 AGM, but now plan to make this a Monday evening in mid-October, to give time for any remaining loose ends to be tied and shipshape! Details in September. The Executive Committee meeting scheduled for June seemed to get lost at sea and apologies to those who turned up for this. So as to have a meeting before the AGM, there will be an Executive Committee meeting on Monday 6th September, 8.00pm at Headquarters.

Keith

Beavers

In a busy term, six more Beavers are to be congratulated on gaining their first swimming badge: Joseph Hoskin, James Irons, Nicholas Paterson, Rory Pemberton, Ian Tozer and Huw Walters. Max Liefkes and Tom Lawn have completed the Beaver Scout Challenge. We have laid tracks in Canbury Gardens, been on a rainy treasure trail in Richmond Park and played a wide variety of team games out of doors whenever possible. The term came to a grand finale with a colourful Pirate Party with boats, eye patches, telescopes and other pirate props made by the Beavers during the term.

Beavers will start again on September 13th at 6.30pm when we look forward to seeing everyone again.

Ros and Catie

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

Headquarters: 92 Lower Ham Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey

Telephone: 0181 549 6286



Coxswain's Corner

Thank goodness the weather has been much better for boating this year. Everyone has been out on the river at each meeting; it has certainly been a lot warmer, and with less water coming down we have managed a full range of activities. As usual, in Summer everyone in the troop has the opportunity to spend virtually as much time as they like on the water – the more who come down on Saturdays, the more we can do. Leander's facilities are superb, it would be very gratifying to see them used to their full potential.

Luckily this year we have been able to start regular canoeing sessions again, as Chris Hampton, an experienced canoe instructor (and star euphonium player in the Kingston and Malden District Band) has been able to come along every fortnight. With assistance from Surbiton Sealions Ventures, much appreciated, a number of the younger scouts about to take their BCU 1 star award and ready to move on to the next stages of proficiency.

You may have noticed the much improved river frontage outside, which has now been levelled and concreted and the mooring rings reset. (Thanks to Chris Osborne and his team). It is much safer now and easier to launch the boats from.

We have also had some notable successes in the District. As the Cubs had won their District Football Competition, it was only right and proper that the Scouts should do the same. Karen organised a very enjoyable Football Competition, held on the all-weather pitches at Kings Meadow, for which we entered two teams who won all their matches, except one, and brought back the junior and senior shields. As we have a some very talented footballers, we can put a strong team into the Royal Navy six-a-side Tournament this autumn – a great event held at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth.

St George's Day, held a week early this year because the District Scout and Guide Band was at Windsor, had quite a good turnout, with everyone on parade looking very smart. It was very rewarding to win the Marshall Trophy this year, which is awarded to the troop with the highest number of points gained from proficiency badges, troop and patrol camps, District, County and National events. We can be very proud of what the troop has participated in, we entered every District event, some County events and took part in all the major National Sea Scout activities.

Quite an impressive list – District Night Hike, Swimming Gala and Football Competition, County Night Hike and Cookery Competition, National Sea Scout Camp, Pulling and Canoeing Regatta and Swimming Championships.

Once again the National Sea Scout and Sea Ranger Pulling and Canoeing Regatta was held in early July. The standard was very high and very competitive, although we came third, everyone who took part worked really hard and there were some good close races. It is always rewarding to see new gig crews come together, under Karen's instruction, and begin to pull very well indeed.

As Laura and James prepare for life as Ventures, Alexander Woods and Edward Barnard have been invested – already they are in the water at every opportunity.

Summer Camp will be at Downe in Kent, where backwoods skills will be fully practised – building bivouacs, sleeping under the stars and cooking without utensils – good survival skills.

THE GREAT RIVER RACE – practice sessions for race teams – 21st and 28th August (call Karen if you any problems). Boating is also available for anyone else who may be around. DON'T FORGET: The Race is on SUNDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER

Hope everyone has a relaxed and enjoyable summer break – first meeting of Autumn is 7th September.

Coxswain

Keith awarded Medal of Merit

The Scout Association makes awards for good service to those who have given valuable service to Scouting over a considerable period. The Medal of Merit is awarded after a period of not less than 15 years of outstanding service.

We are very lucky that Keith has given much of that service to us in Leander.

Cub Report

This term the cubs have worked toward the local history badge, they learnt about the history of Kingston and its coat of arms. The programme finished with walks around Kingston with one of the local historian. All boys worked very hard towards the badge well done.

The swimming has taken off well and we are looking forward to the District gala on Saturday 16th October. Most boys now have the Swimmer One badge and may be working towards the others. This is all with the help of Buffy and Claire. A big thanks to them.

On the 30th June we held a sports day at Kingsmeadow sport stadium and all boys attended. We held various events which were all scored towards the Athletes badges. All cubs seemed to enjoy themselves and all tried very hard. Thanks to all who came along and helped on the day.

Five boys gained Badge 1

Nineteen boys gained Badges 1 & 2

Five boys gained Badges 1, 2 & 3

Without the help of the parents the events would not run as well as they do. May I take this chance to say thank you to you all for the help you are giving

On the 9th July the Sixers and Seconders had a sleep-over at the HQ. This was towards the Commissioner's 24-hour Challenge. On the first evening the cubs played games at Richmond Park and cooked on an open fire. On the Saturday they learnt to pitch a tent and how to care for it. They made their own lunches. (Mums – don't be fooled – they can do it when they want!!!) In the afternoon they teamed up with more Scouts and learnt the parts of a boat and then went rowing up the river. Thanks to Ian and Ness for the help over the 24 hours. Thanks to Coxswain and Karen for the afternoon. A special thanks to Danny Wileman and Robbie Mitchell who came down to help for the whole event.

In September, six boys have been selected to attend the District Cub Camp from the 24th to the 26th at Polyapes camp site.

As from September the subs will be £20. This is to cover the cost of swimming during each term. Please remember to bring this with you on the first meeting

and seen Nick or Jan Wileman at the end of the meeting.

The first date in September will be 15th September at the HQ at 6.45pm. We say goodbye and good luck in the Scout Section to Alex Snow and Jack Hudson.

Once again thanks for your help during the terms. I will be sending out the help rota for next term soon. Hope you all have a good Summer break and see you in September.

Akela (Tim)

Ventures

Three of the Venture Scouts have been down to earth helping out at the Troop Summer Camp at Downe but, apart from this, there is nothing planned in July or August. Things really hot up in September, though, when there will be a Venture Scout gig crew in the Great River Race. One way to dry out after this will be the trip planned for later in the month, taking to the air with the Hertfordshire/Bedfordshire Scout Paragliding Association. Then, in October, it's back to the water again if a proposed narrow boat odyssey comes off.

That's taken care of Earth, Air and Water – they haven't told me anything about the Fire yet!

Ness

Water Rat dates

Reminder for all contributors. Copy due:
October 10th, December. 11th;
2000 – March 12th, May 14th, July 16th.

Your friendly editor and wielder of the cat-o'-nine-tails is Nigel Duffin, tel: 977 8305, fax: 255 3121, email: nigel@duffin.demon.co.uk. Electronic form preferred, or I will quiz you over the phone and give expression to aquatic burblings. Also photos of activities can be scanned in for printing.

While you're e-mailing a contribution, have a look at the embryonic Leander website, where you can relive those past Water Rat moments electronically at: <http://www.leanderss.free-online.co.uk/>

Family Camp

The last family camp we had in 1995 was a great affair, but I think this year exceeded all expectations. Since that last camp, parents have quite often asked when the next one would be, so early last year we booked the same site at Chalfont Heights for 1999.

Having organised the '95 camp I know how much effort went into setting it up and sorting everything out, so it was a great relief when Ness agreed to take over the organisation. It requires an enormous amount of patience, checking who is coming, taking the money in, borrowing tents and equipment, booking transport, organising the catering, liaising with the site, and making endless phone calls. Without a doubt, Ness succeeded magnificently, the whole event was absolutely faultless – Leander took over half a large field and well over 120 parents, beavers, cubs, scouts, ventures, brothers, sisters and leaders had a weekend that exceeded all expectations.

Gary is now THE quartermaster – they don't come any better. With over twenty five patrol tents and three marquees to pitch, a huge amount of provisions and cooking equipment to set up, this all ran very smoothly. Central catering can often be a nightmare, but it all worked very efficiently and the food was good. Ness and Gary, plus Sally and Claire, stayed on site from Wednesday evening, pitching the majority of the tents, so we all are greatly indebted to them.

Incredibly, the rain stayed away and the tents remained dry. Drying out that amount of tents and large marquees in the headquarters would have been an absolute nightmare.

As camp leader, my job was very straightforward, just making sure the schedule worked and activities happened at the right time. With families divided up into four teams, very ably led by Karen, Ian, Buffy and Carl, everyone had the chance to try archery, rifle shooting, the climbing wall or assault course, field games and orienteering. Because of time, the orienteering course had to be shortened after it started, but the majority of families found the controls and turned in some pretty good times. Of course there is always one family who become spectacularly lost and even won a prize for it!

The camp fire, under Chris Feltham's inspired leadership, was a great success – who will forget the stunning performance of the two coachman and the

highwayman and for those who stayed up, hearing the complete Beatles, Don McClean and Simon and Garfunkel repertoire?

What goes up has to come down, and striking camp on Sunday afternoon was amazingly quick. Parent power really does work, the tents were folded away most efficiently and the lorry loaded in record time.

A Family Camp really does bring people together, it is part of the true spirit of Scouting, helps to keep the Group strong and gives us all the chance to get to know each other a little better. Here's to the next one in 2003.

Coxswain

Sunday Working Parties

Parents' working parties are on the second Sunday of each month from 10:00 to 12:00 and there will be a member of the Executive Committee or a Leader who knows about the jobs required. The jobs will include Hoovering, cleaning the kitchen and toilets, mowing the lawn, tidying camping and boat gear, taking inventories, occasional painting and wood-work, etc., so that there is work for everyone to do.

The lists for the Autumn working parties are below – apologies for the impersonal use of surnames! If you are unable to have someone attend on that day, you are asked to *arrange a swap* with another family.

September 12th: – Pemberton, Pratt, Quinn, Rhoades, Rowland, Seeley, Shanahan, Snow.

October 10th – Sollis, Tindall, Tozer, Veillet, Voller, Walters, Weatherburn, Whitaker, Whitfield.

November 14th – Wileman, Williams, Williamson, Wingrove, Woodhouse, Woods, Young.

Dates for your Diary

August 21&28 – Scout Great River Race practice

September 5 – Great River Race

September 6 – Executive Meeting, 8 p.m.

September 7 – Scout Meeting

September 12 – Parents' Working Party

September 13/15 – Beaver/Cub meeting

September 24/26 – District Cub Camp

October 10 – Parents' Working Party

October (t.b.a.) – Leander AGM

October 16 – District Gala