



The Water Rat

Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

October 2003

editor – Nigel Duffin

Skipper's Scrawl



Leander under-14 crew, coxed by Ian Chappell, came first in their class in the Great River Race

Although it's only two months since the Summer break, it seems the programme has been non-stop. We started at the beginning of September with the Great River Race, with ten gig crews leaving Leander (five from the Group and five from Kingston Rotary Club) for the annual race from Richmond to Greenwich. All crews did well, especially the under-14s who, coxed by Ian Chappell, came first in their class. The Guild also did well, coming second in the Scout associated class – no mean achievement, since the crew's average age exceeded 65! Leander Mums also excelled themselves, finishing in good style, despite the fact that theirs had been a somewhat last minute entry and they had only had about four practice sessions. Our thanks to Neil Winklass and Ray Andrews for providing the tow back for the boats after the race and of course to London United for providing a double decker to get the crews back. After a lot of last minute work

we were also able to get the *Ebbage 2* finished and seaworthy, so Coxswain and I had the opportunity to follow the race, rather than go in the gigs. It was certainly a great help at the finish to be able to tow boats across to the Greenwich pier to make up the tow and off load the crews.

Beavers started again in September under Mandy and Margaret and are now up to full strength at 19. They have almost all completed their Discovery challenge badges and Dick Garnish's help with swimming has been well appreciated. Cubs also have increased their numbers to 30 now and we must look to recruiting another leader to help Steve and Keith.

October has also been a busy month, with Scouts and Explorers going to Portsmouth for the RN football competition. This is certainly an experience, as they stay on board a destroyer at

Portsmouth and are able to use the Navy's facilities. Congratulations are again in order, as one team came home with the winner's trophy and the other reached the semi finals.

Finally, just to fill the trophy table, we now sport the Kingston and Malden District Scout Swimming Gala trophy.

With so much going on, unfortunately the HQ housekeeping has been suffering and, in addition to the normal winter programme, we need to spend some time on maintenance. A good start has been made in clearing up the Boat Deck but we need to make more racking and I would like to emphasise to parents the importance of the monthly Sunday morning cleaning parties. If you can't attend on your designated day please make sure you arrange a swap with someone else. Similarly, I am sure the section leaders would appreciate it if

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parents can offer help in clearing up after meetings, even if its just sweeping the Main Deck or tidying the galley. Over the coming months I will be calling for volunteers to do some DIY work on the building and boats, so please let me know if you are prepared to help occasionally, as many hands make light work. We are also in desperate need of a Quartermaster to look after the camping gear and stores.

Finally, a word of thanks to Michael Kingham and 'Pick of The Bunch', who have kindly agreed to sponsor the cost of producing the *Water Rat* for the year and also make a contribution towards the cost of boat maintenance. In view of our wanting to replace the Coypu dinghies this year, we greatly appreciate all the financial help we can get.

Keith



Pick of the Bunch, 140-142 Richmond Road, Kingston – 020 8549 5000
also at Upper Ham Road, Ham Common, and 200 Kingston Road, Teddington
www.pick-of-the-bunch.com

Pick of the Bunch is a family owned business that has been operating for 32 years.

ESU on a Winning Streak

After a very long and hard period running up to the National Sea Scout Pulling Regatta, I was very proud to see that the outcome was Leander becoming the first Explorer Unit to win the overall trophy, which was last won by our Ventures three years ago. Just a few weeks after, four Explorers and I accompanied the Troop for the last Summer Camp before we go our own way. It was a very wet and different camp, as I now know that some of the members are

afraid of Girl Guides and like to dress in bikinis (no names needed).

After a few weeks off to wring ourselves out, we had a date with the Great River Race, which was hard work this year and, sad to say, but the ESU got beaten by Leander's own under-14 crew. But we would like to congratulate them for winning their age range. That left two more weeks on the river to renew some old skills in the canoes, but now

– here comes the time any Sea Scout hates – BEING INDOORS!

But the competitions had not stopped and the Explorers are packing the football kit for a six-a-side football tournament down in Portsmouth, sleeping on HMS Bristol once again. While I opted to look after the Troop that weekend, Coxswain had the pleasure of watching the Explorers. After a little bit of argy-bargy, the Unit showed how much of a Unit they really are, and went on to win the tournament for the second time in three years.

Sunday Morning Working Parties

Parents, 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.

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

- November 9 – *Hazard, Hearn, Howe, Kersey, King
- November 23 – *Lafon, Lear, MacAllister, Maguire, Manson
- December 14 – *McDonagh, McGuinness, Mellett, Morrissey, Osborne
- January 11 – *Paintin, Pearn, Peto, Pope, Pratt
- January 25 – *Sibley, Smith, Steele, Taylor, Waller
- February 8 – *Walters, Whitfield, Wingrove, Woods, Young

Then on to the Swimming Gala (do these event ever stop?). Well done to all that took part, but sadly we only came second out of three units.

Now the time has come for the Unit to concentrate on gaining further skills and hopefully starting on the road to gaining their Duke of Edinburgh/Queen Scout awards, but it will take time.

Well done once again for all of your hard work over the past few months.

Kaz.

Coxswain's Corner

This Autumn we will be experimenting with a few ideas to see which is the best way forward for the Troop. As we have mentioned before, the move to a younger Scout section and the hiving off of the older Scouts to Explorers is still a cause of concern. We are not going to lose any of our seamanship requirements and we will meet the new programme criteria; the problem is finding a mechanism that can accommodate all these demands in a flexible and satisfying way. With Karen committed now to Explorers, both Ian and I have restrictions on our time – we'll work a way out.

Summer Camp

After last year's hectic events in Holland, we decided a nice quiet back-to-basics camp would be in order, consequently 14 Scouts, 3 Explorers and 3 leaders arrived at Broadstone Warren campsite, in deepest Sussex, in late July. The sun shone, but not for long; as the trailer with all the kit arrived, the rains started and got heavier and heavier. We are used to striking camp in the rain, but pitching camp in these conditions is a real pain – we got the only week of bad weather this Summer. As the new mess tent went up, the ditch hastily dug around it helped keep some of the water away, but the rock hard ground was rapidly turning into a quagmire.

We're Sea Scouts, though, and shrug off such things. Soon the camp was up and running and the sun did peek out quite a few times. The site has huge areas of thick woodland, which we soon got to know well, scouring the area for firewood. Karen had devised a very varied and quite different camp menu, which involved all the main meals being cooked over open fires. By the end of the week, Scout cooking skills had become very accomplished – trout cooked in wet newspaper and garlic bread done in a cardboard oven were brilliant.

As always we try and include a wide variety of activities – shooting, archery, abseiling, grass sledging went down well

and very popular was the underground potholing system, a fiendish network of tunnels and squeezes – much enjoyed by the smaller Scouts, although no one actually got stuck.

We had a day out on the Bluebell Railway, steaming gently through the Sussex countryside and enjoying this unique preserved railway. Our traditional day hike saw the scouts divided into two groups, each navigating a prescribed route through a variety of habitats. The younger Scouts learnt how to use a felling axe properly and how to light a fire with wet wood – basic stuff, but so useful.

On our return, we then spent a few hours on what is now almost a tradition – hanging the tents up in the HQ to dry out properly. All in all, a very good week, with special thanks to the other leaders, Karen and Jonathan and to the Explorers, without whom the camp would be impossible to run.

RN Football

Once again Leander put two teams into this very popular event, with Karen managing the under-14s and Coxswain the under-16s. It is a very busy weekend, everyone accommodated on HMS Bristol, run to ship's time, with a 6.00am call in the morning and every minute committed until lights out.

The weather was great, the under-14s got through to the semi-finals, their best result so far, and the under-16s, after a slow start, got better and better and won their event. The competition is very tough, there are some excellent teams and some very skilled players, representing RN groups from as far away as Torbay, Merseyside, Colchester and Guernsey. The semi final, against Warwick, was a great display of football, the Leander team really working together and winning handsomely. A great team of scousers, from Ollerton on Merseyside, were tough opponents in the final, the game went to golden goal extra time and then to the dreaded penalty shootout. Nathan McGuinness made the save of his life and blocked

Ollerton's first penalty. Miles King, who had also just won the penalty competition, for the second time, then with great accuracy, fired the ball into the corner of the net. Much rejoicing from a very tired but happy team.

Very well done Aidan Hazard, Jonathan Freeman, Miles King, Matt King, Sam Whitfield, and Nathan McGuinness.

District Swimming Gala

A few weeks ago, Kingston & Malden District joined with Surbiton District to hold a joint swimming gala at the Malden Centre. This was a resounding success, with a packed programme of events for under 12, 14, 16 and 18 years age groups. A great result – Leander won for the third consecutive time. Winners of events will now be eligible for the County Gala in early November.

New Meeting Times

We have changed the times at which Troop meetings start, to give everyone a little more time to deal with meals, after school activities and traffic. We will meet at 7.15 pm for 7.30 pm start .

Coxswain

New Web Address

Same website at present, but a new address: Change your bookmark now!

www.leanderseascouts.co.uk

Dates for your Diary

November 15 – Executive Meeting

November 9 – HQ Working Party:

*Hazard, Hearn, Howe, Kersey, King

November 23 – HQ Working

Party: *Lafon, Lear, MacAllister, Maguire, Manson

December 14 – HQ Working Party:

*McDonagh, McGuinness, Mellett, Morrissey, Osborne

Cubs navigating the Galley

At the end of the Summer, we said goodbye to George Taylor, Harry Byrd and Dominic Mellett. In September, we opened a new Six and so, ablt to take in rather more than usual, welcomed into the Pack Lianne Aviram, Oliver Pratelli, William Troullides, William Beedham, Holly Barnard, Viviana Gardener and Emily Burley.

New Sixers made this term are Zoe D'Souza and James Kimber, with new Seconders Adrian Barley, Zack Goodall and Jonathan Edwards. Sixers and Seconders are now regularly visiting the Troop meeings in twos or threes as part our Pack-Troop link programme.

We've been working on the Chef badge and the Cubs, with the help of visiting parents baked some fairy cakes – and



very tasty they were too! There will be no holding them back when the bigger cooker gets installed in the Galley.



For the Adventure badge, we've been learning the points of the compass, how to take bearings and how to set and read a map. The Cubs have been out on Ham Common practising their map and compass work and lighting fires. They had to find there way back using a map and compass – pretty scary, but really important skills.

More fire on 5th November for Bonfire Night, and a reminder (if you're reading this before then) that parents are bringing some fireworks to make the evening go with a bang!

Steve



Leander 'Mums' crew pulling hard in the Great River Race

Behind the Ebbage



"What's happening to the Ebbage?", "Will it ever go out again?" I'm sure many of you will have seen Ebbage II, our safety/escort boat, half rebuilt and looking rather forlorn at the back of the Boat Deck. This year we made the effort and planned to have her ready for the Great River Race. It is essential to have a decent powered craft that can transfer a gig crew, in safety, from the boats to Greenwich Pier. With the number of Leander boats participating, getting everybody off the water from the finish can be very tricky; if the tide has turned too far, it can be very difficult indeed.

We found all the odd nuts and spacers and tiny fittings that came with outboard engine, laid everything out and spent quite a few late nights finishing things off. The steering cable had to be re routed, electrical cables installed, battery isolator fitted, fuses and switches installed and connected, the remainder of the thwarts secured, decking installed and the spare outboard bracket mounted. Keith and I spent many hours working in the most confined spaces and eventually the boat was launched a few days before the race. The trim was fine tuned with a few bags of ballast fore and aft, then out for a test run.

How does she go? – beautifully! With a 25hp electric-start Evinrude, plenty of power in hand, she is very smooth and stable. Removing the cabin has given us a very nice open boat with attractive lines, plenty of seating and excellent visibility all round. All that needs to be done now this Winter is to refurbish the gelcoat, clean the rest of the fibreglass and do some judicious repainting. We will then have a craft that is quite unique and worthy of the name she carries.

Coxswain