



The Water Rat

Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

July 2004

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Skipper's Scrawl

With the Troop and Explorers away on Summer Camp and the Cubs and Beavers having their Summer holiday break, this edition of the *Water Rat* is a somewhat interim newsletter pending the bumper edition which should follow in September with reports on camps and Great River Race, etc.

Firstly, I would like to record my thanks to Steve d'Souza for his hard work over the last five years with the Cubs. The last meeting before the Summer break was, of course, the party evening and, whilst this was going on, it gave me a chance to meet with the Cub parents and clarify the situation for September. At present, we do not have sufficient volunteers to become warranted Cub Leaders and still need at least one, preferably two, more people prepared to take on the job. Cubs will be restarting on the 15th September and whilst I can find warranted Leaders to help out for a few weeks whilst new leaders find their feet, unless we have the volunteers to take over the section we will have no option but to temporarily close Cubs. So volunteers please, the more there are the easier the job becomes. If you can't take on the job please think about who else could.

As reported previously, plans are now well in hand for the amalgamation of the Kingston & Malden and Surbiton Districts under the leadership of the new District commissioner, Bob Bushell. The new District will be called

'Royal Kingston' and a competition is being held to design a new District badge. Bob recently held a combined District Leaders meeting to outline his plans for how the new District would operate and this gave all the groups a chance to discuss and put forwards suggestions on how best to move forward and make good use of the increased facilities which will be available when we combine activities between the old Districts. Obviously, the changes will take a little time to implement but we can expect to start reaping the benefits of the amalgamation quite quickly. I would hasten to assure everyone that there will not be any radical changes within our Group structure, simply that we can all benefit from a more efficient linking for

the organisation of combined District activities and support functions.

This year's Sea Scout and Sea Ranger Regatta again went smoothly and I would like to thank everyone who helped for their support on the day in setting up the facilities on the towpath, setting out the course buoys, preparing the boats, providing the refreshments and the countless other jobs which needed to be done. We borrowed extra Coypus and Gigs from Surbiton Sealion and Ajax, Roger Jones arranged for us to have the use of a large pontoon and Don Everitt of Warspite (the hero who fixed our HQ heating boiler last winter) set up the stake boats, provided the canoes and organised the umpiring.



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As a result of these combined efforts we managed to get through a total of 93 races on the day and everyone had a most enjoyable time. Well done to our Scouts and ESU in again doing very well winning a large number of trophies and coming first overall in the under 14 and Explorer sections. I was also pleased to see a greater interest from Scout Headquarters this year as we were visited by Daragh O'Malley, HQ national advisor on Sea Scouts, our County and District Commissioners, and of course the Staff Officer Scouts, Lt Cdr Rod Williams, who presented the trophies.

Finally an update on the Groups Wooden Gig 'Alert'. As you know, the Gig was sent up to Norfolk for a full survey to determine the cause of the excessive leaking and, as suspected, rot was discovered in the keel and hog as well as a couple of planks and the bottom half of the transom. The cost of repairs is likely to be in the region of £4500, since, to effect the repairs, essentially the boat has to be split in half to renew the hog and keel and then put back together. Hopefully this will result in another 20 years use without another major refit and all being well we should get the Gig back in time for the Great River Race in mid September. It does, however, mean that we shall have to embark on some major fundraising efforts to cover these costs, especially as we also need to look to renewing our marquee and also completing an update of our disabled access facilities.

Keith



Dates for your Diary

- September 11 – Great River Race
- September 12 – HQ working party:
*Webb, Wheller, Whitfield,
Wingrove, Woods
- September 20 – Executive meeting,
8pm
- September 26 – HQ working party
(new rota to be circulated)
- November 15 – Executive meeting,
8pm

Cubs form up for a broadside



Beavers rise to outdoor challenge



The Beavers have been working towards their Outdoor Challenge Badge and have been to see the very impressive organ at Kingston Parish Church. The Organist, David Terry, kindly gave us a demonstration.

We also had a visit from recycling expert Des Kay, who gave the children an interesting talk about landfill sites and the benefits of recycling for the environment. Des Kay founded the *Save the World Club*, a charity based in North Kingston, which focusses on practical youth arts, environmental work and education. It won the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2004, announced on June 2nd.

Also, having undergone a series of swimming tests over a period of weeks, several children were awarded their stage one swimming badges.

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.

Leander couldn't run effectively without parents' helping this way – it's one of the ways you can support the voluntary work of the leaders. There is one Sunday in September left on the existing rota.

September 12 – *Webb, Wheller,
Whitfield, Wingrove, Woods

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

There will be a NEW ROTA circulated after the Summer break, and, this time, we'll try to group families so that there are one or two more 'experienced', 'long-standing' families on each Sunday.

This means there should always be some who 'know the ropes'.

