



The Water Rat

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Skipper's Scrawl

There was a good turn-out for the Admiralty Inspection and, despite one boy being on parade with white socks, I am pleased to report that Royal Navy Recognition has again been recommended by the Inspecting Officer. Well done to everyone – especially Coxswain – for their efforts. For those new to Leander, Royal Navy Recognition means we are one of just a hundred Sea Scout Groups in the United Kingdom and Channel Islands whose standards reach the required level.

I was also pleased with the results of the Great River Race (one time in the year when Chief and I get a chance to cox a gig crew). Both crews did well – especially the under-14 team, who came second in their class, beaten by a crew rowing a Thames Skiff. It's about time the handicaps were reviewed!

As the Scouts and Ventures well know, we have had a change round of Leaders in these sections. Because of family commitments, Vanessa with husband Garry will now be running Ventures, whilst Garry Mitchell has moved over to the Troop to help Coxswain.

However, things are now very difficult in the Cub and Beaver Sections, where we have no warranted Leader.

Although we are grateful to the parents who help on a regular basis, we must recruit a Leader in charge for both of these sections, as otherwise the continuity and programme suffer. As an interim measure, Cubs are being looked after by John Dadds from the District Team, but this is only a stop-gap. It is essential to have someone who is prepared to run the sections and take on responsibility for programme continuity, otherwise standards will deteriorate. I would therefore ask everyone to think whether they know anyone who might be willing to take these jobs on.

Finally, there is a little better news on the financial front. I have just received a further grant from the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames to assist us to purchase two more new canoes. Hopefully these will be delivered shortly. Should anyone be interested in buying one or more of the old ones (about £30 - 35), please let me know, but note that it will not be possible to store them in the Headquarters.

Keith

Admiralty Inspection

Thursday 19th September 1996

Lieutenant Commander Henry Millington was met a Kingston Bridge by five senior Scouts in one of the wooden gigs. The cox was David King who managed to keep them all in order (some mean feat!). They rowed him back at a rate of 50 strokes a minute. Commander Millington commented on the rate of strokes and was very impressed when they were still rowing at 50 strokes a minute upon reaching the headquarters.

In the meantime, all those left behind put about straightening scarves, retieing cap ribbons, ensuring that boots were clean, badges were sewn on properly and that nerves were kept calm. We also ensured that all the boats needed were launched and equipment stowed in the right place.

When the Commander arrived, he was met by Skipper (Keith Maund) and kept chatting for a few minutes in order for the gig crew the change and fall in for colours. Colours were performed by David King

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playing the call and Alex Newman raising the ensign. He was then introduced to the officers while the Scouts got changed for their water activities.

Each of the Beavers and Cubs was introduced to the Commander while he watched the proceedings on the water from the Bridge.

Later he was taken out in the rescue boat manned by Karen Loizou and Gary Smith. When asked what the programme was Chief replied "Each member of the Troop in doing something they have not done before". Daniel Wileman got a shock when, while coxing the junior gig, his rudder was removed. After the initial confusion and a few instructions from Chief, control was regained and the crew were landed safely using orders only.

When it was time to come off the water, the boats were put away in record time. All the Scouts looked as smart as they did at the beginning of the evening, if just a little wetter! After sunset colours, Commander Millington sat the Scouts down for a chat. They were able to answer all his questions, some with a little help.

David King was commended on his teaching of Sculling Over the Stern, and was told that it was the best he had ever seen. Gary and Karen were praised on their safety and rescue skills especially for not getting the Inspecting Officer wet.

Overall, the evening went well and we were pleased to be told that the recommendation that we retain Admiralty status for another year be put forward to the Admiral of the Home Fleet.

So I think we should all give ourselves a big pat on the back for all the hard work and effort everyone put in.

Beavers

With the first major event after Summer Camp being the Admiralty Inspection, the Beavers spent their first two meetings being put in a nautical frame of mind. Chief taught them about how locks work and the boys then produced some paintings connected with water. The boys also practised standing still in a straight line ready for the Lieutenant Commander's visit. The Inspection went well and those Beavers that did attend represented the Colony well; there were not many mistakes made during the game of *Port, Starboard, Fore and Aft*.

We had a visit from Ness and Alex Newman the week after the Inspection and they showed the boys the basics of how to row a Coypu and how to canoe safely. This was all done on the floor of the Boat Deck, so no-one got very wet, only the boys who had the privilege of sitting in canoes that had been on the water the day before and had not completely dried out. A big thank-you to Ness and Alex, I know the boys all enjoyed your visit. The swimming programme is continuing and hopefully the problems recently encountered will soon be sorted out – keep up the good work, Katie.

The programme for the rest of this term has now been finalised and any parents who have not had a copy should see one of the organising team. The organisation of Beavers is currently in the willing hands of Ian Chappell, Tim Pearce and Jan Wileman, although, with shift work and other commitment, none of us can run the colony on a full-time basis: as our sons grow up, we will not be here, so there will always be a need for other parents to move in as we move out. Any volunteers??

Please remember to pay your subs. There are some boys who do not have a single tick to their name on the money sheet, and, should this reminder not work, then personal reminders will be sent home.

Jan Wileman

Scout Summer Camp

Summer camp started well, with a good journey up, and good weather while we unpacked and put the tents up. On the first day, we got the boats off the trailer and went on the Hamble.

We booked the archery for an hour and it was very enjoyable. Alexis and Matt did some good shooting, but Danny managed to win the tournament (having only hit the target three out of twenty times before) by getting a Gold against Alexis' Blue.

The rifle shooting was also fun, with Alex and Bassy getting high scores.

Everyone agreed that the Portsmouth trip was worthwhile. We got tickets for the Harbour trip and the other ships and exhibitions. Alexis made a fool of himself falling down some stairs and Jamie banging his head on a lamp.

Alexis, Alex, Danny, Asher and Karen stood out on the Ice Rink and we went to the sea front and arcade on the last day.

We all did well on the climbing wall, with Jamie having a dodgy looking hand-up on the hard part of it. Alex then led us to a swimming pool for a good old mess around.

Cheers to Coxswain and Karen for organising it and to Gary for driving us around.

James Mitchell

Coxswain's note: Just a few points to add to Jamie's piece. We were at Cricket Camp, which is in Bursledon Country Park on the River Hamble, and we actually got out on the Hamble for four of the days. Everybody was able to sail, canoe and row, with really good weather, especially for sailing. Many thanks to Andy King, who was down for the week and gave lots of valuable Topper instruction.

Lawrie came across from Dorset and, with Jonathan and James, took canoes up the Hamble as far as they could reach. From all accounts, a great day's expedition.

Final note: all the Ventures were down at Cricket during the camp, so we had a very good turnout, as much time on the water as we could hope for, and a very enjoyable time for everyone who went.

Hot off the press: Congratulations to Karen and Louise, who finally received their warrants from Mike Wellman, District Commissioner, this week.

NaWaKa 1997

Sunday 27th July - Friday 8th August 1997

NaWaKa is an international Scout Jamboree for Sea Scouts from all over the World held in Roermond Southern Holland. It is organised by Dutch Sea Scouts and has been run every 4 years for the last 30 years.

Those who have been before will tell you it is one of the best camps they ever attended as Scouts, as they had the opportunity to do so many different things and meet so many different people.

Each Troop going is given a Lillieflat Sailing boat which converts into a rowing boat much like our Coypu, but at five times the weight, as they are made of steel.

There will be trips to different parts of Holland as well as all the normal Scout activities such as hiking, Communications and of course bike rides!

A letter giving full details will be available in the next week, so if any one would like to go please contact Ness on 0181 384 8955. This is open to all Cubs, Scouts and Ventures who will over the age of 10½ on the 30th April 1997.

The estimated cost of the trip is £225, fully inclusive.

Leander Annual Dinner

The Leander Supporters' Annual Christmas/New Year Dinner this year is Saturday 11th January 1997 and costs £8.50 per head, excluding wine, which is available by the bottle. This dinner is limited to about fifty and is always very popular, so book soon!

Please send a cheque (payable to M Duffin) with the application form to Marion Duffin. For further details, contact Marion on 0181 549 2317.

Leander Supporters' Annual Dinner – Saturday 11th January 1997

Please reserve places for the Dinner

A cheque for is enclosed (£8.50 per person, payable to M Duffin)

Full names of those attending

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To: Marion Duffin, 17 Arthur Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 6BA

Great River Race

This year's race took place on September 7th, which was quite a warm day. Leander entered two teams, one under-16 and one under-14. The under-16 team members were Alex, Alexis, Matt, Bassie and Asha, with Chief as cox. The younger team was made up with Alastair, Danny, Jamie, Michael, Johnny and James, with Skipper as cox.

We started at Ham House and rowed all the way to Greenwich, going under all of the Thames bridges on the route, and passing several landmarks such as Fulham football ground, the Houses of Parliament and HMS Belfast.

We rowed at a steady pace throughout and completed the course in under four hours. The Rotary Club and the Guild both overtook us. The under-14 team had the tide throughout the race, but the tide turned after we had finished and was against the under-16s for the last stretch of their race.

A big thank-you to Coxswain, Ness and Karen for helping throughout the day and for transporting the boats to and from Leander, and to Chief and Skipper for supervising and coxing the teams.

Once all the teams using Leander's gigs had finished, we all came back to Kingston on a special bus provided by Chief

Danny Wileman

Under New Management

Venture Scouts are now meeting on Wednesday evenings, 8.00pm to 10.00pm.

If you are between 15 & 21 and want something more exciting to do than sitting in front of the TV, why not come and see what we get up to. Who knows you may have an idea we had not thought of. Our Aim to help you achieve what ever you want to do. Just because we are a Sea Venture Unit it does not mean we will be spending all our time on the water.

Ness

From the Chair

The Group Executive Committee met on 30th September. As Chair of the Committee, I hope that all Water Rat readers will be interested in keeping up to date with what is discussed.

I was pleased to attend the Admiralty Inspection in September and see a range of activities. The Inspecting Officer certainly tested some of the Scouts in what he asked them to do and was extremely complimentary in his remarks. Keith has reported about the lack of warranted leaders in the Beaver and Cub sections and it is indeed a serious concern that such good training and experiences as Leander is able to offer may be in jeopardy. There is a waiting list for membership of all sections and the committee felt that we are in danger of losing boys and girls if the programme is not maintained at a high standard from week to week. Undoubtedly, the best leaders come to the Group through personal connections and "recommendation". The Group and Scout Association offer full support and training, and if anyone knows anyone they think might consider taking on one of these jobs, they are urged to contact Keith.

Fund-raising is a continued concern, if subs are to be kept at a level which will not prevent anyone from taking part in Leander's activities. Sunday trading in Kingston seems to have affected our proceeds from selling teas. Fund-raising will be a special agenda item for the next meeting and I would ask anyone who has ideas about improving our current ways of raising money or suggesting new ones to contact Keith in the next month.

Transport for Group activities is becoming an increasing difficulty and there was some discussion as to whether it was possible, appropriate and economic for the Leander to own a vehicle. This needs discussing with details of costs of owning and renting and is another item for the next meeting.

If you wish to raise an issue with the Executive Committee, please speak to one of the parent members, Keith or myself.

Nigel Duffin (Chair of Executive)

Leander Annual Dinner – 11th January 1997