



The Water Rat

Published by Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

November 1997

Chief (Mick Chinnock) 1943-1997

I am sure everyone who knew "Chief" will, like me, be very sad about his sudden death, and our thoughts at this time are with Jen and the family. The tribute to his achievements and the respect he commanded were more than shown by the number of his friends and colleagues who attended his funeral.

When I took over as GSL on Bruno's retirement, Mick was the mainstay of the Group and knowing I could rely on his experience to run the Scout troop made my induction so much easier. When he stood down as Scout Leader, Mick took on the position of assistant GSL and became involved in the other sections of the Group as well, and it will be very difficult for us to fill all the jobs he did.



Bruno and Gordon Biden have penned tributes to Chief's work with the Group below and I can do little but endorse their comments. I know that, although sadly missed, his name and achievements will live on within Leander and all the Scouts who have benefited from his dedicated leadership.

As you know, Jen's wish was that any donations in Mick's memory should go to either Leander or the Heart Foundation and it is our intention that, as a memorial to Mick, money received by the Group will be used to complete the "Bridge" (balcony) overlooking the river by tiling

the surface, erecting a fully rigged flag mast with yard arm and gaff and getting a hardwood bench with plaque. Additionally there will also be a trophy for the scouts to compete for.

Keith Maund

He was a 'one-off'

I first met Mick Chinnock when his son, Ian, was waiting to join the Cubs and attending the swimming sessions run by Jack Andrews at the old Kingston Baths. Ian duly joined, and Mick and Jen gradually became increasingly involved in assisting the Group. Whatever form of fund-raising, you could depend on the two of them giving their full support.

Mick became more and more involved, taking out a warrant as a Scouter, eventually becoming Scout

Leader. As is usual with Troop Scouters, he was given a nickname, to escape the formal 'Mr Chinnock' or the use of his Christian name, and became 'Chief'. I remember Jen telling me of phone calls asking for 'Mrs Chief'!

As always with Mick, he threw himself heartily into first assisting and then running the Scout Troop. He stood no nonsense, with a high standard of discipline and expectation of achievement, winning the Marshall

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Flag District Trophy in three successive years, with successes also in many District events.

He coped during the most traumatic time in the Group's history – the period between the demolition of the old Headquarters and being able to move into the shell of the new one – running Troop meetings at the 3rd Kingston HQ, having restricted and sometimes no boating, with equipment scattered to the four winds, housed in garages, lofts, in a container at the rear of the stairless, unfloored, extremely basic HQ. Nothing ever got him down – an obstacle was merely something which would be overcome.

At his funeral, I was reminded of some measure of his success by the presence of the now young men in their late teens and early twenties, who took the trouble to pay their tribute to someone who had such an effect in their young lives.

When lack of time caused him to give up running the Scout Troop, he became Assistant GSL, taking some of the load from Keith's shoulders. You name it – he did it! Everything from the Group rolls, with waiting lists, dates of moving between sections, etc., to foreman concrete layer at the side of the HQ, and recently giving help to John Dadds with the Cub Pack.

He will certainly leave a large hole in the Group, which I feel may never get adequately filled, for he was a 'one-off' if ever I saw one.

Bruno

Such a big heart

My memories of Mick go back to the late 70s when Ian, then a newly invested Scout, was coming to camp with the Troop to Lympstone in Devon. As we were loading the boats, camp gear and kit into the lorry, Mick showed up to give a hand. When explaining that I was going to drive the lorry down on the Friday, unload, and come back for my own kit and family, he offered there and then to join me for company. This was the way of Mick, nothing was too much trouble, if he could help he would, and a way would be found, even though he did shift work. There was always someone to cover for him or exchange duties.

After the Camp trip Mick showed he was interested to help more with the Troop, so I suggested he went on an Information Course. This he did and he was converted. He joined the Movement and got on with his training to gain his Wood Badge in record time. As Assistant Scout Leader he was invaluable, always ready to learn, much liked by the boys, and being a younger person was able to join in the rough house, football and swimming.

The Troop went every year to compete in the National Sea Scout Swimming Gala at Torpoint, HMS Raleigh. On Mick's first visit he immediately offered to referee the five-a-side football competition and this he did for

many years. On another occasion it was decided to take our boys in the Group Land Rover and share the driving. On the way down, the nearer we got to Cornwall, the slower we went and, in the end, 20mph was the fastest we could go. On reaching the Naval Base, all the experts couldn't find the trouble so we arranged for the boys to come back to Kingston with a Group from Kent and we nursed the Land Rover home with Mick determined to do all the driving. We took nearly nine hours but made it.

I have many happy memories of those days together with Mick for which I shall always be grateful. Not forgetting Jen, who was right behind him and a magnificent Mum supporting Sunday Teas and fund raising.

Mick's enthusiasm for Leander showed from day one. We were the best, so when I gave up as Scout Leader to concentrate on building the new HQ, he took over and history shows the success the Troop had.

When the meetings were held at 3rd Kingston for several years during the rebuilding, the numbers grew and it was due to Mick's determination that Scout and Sea Scout training would go on even though we were not by the river and the equipment was parked in several places and necessary gear carried in the Group's Land Rover which he looked after.

For my part I was glad that it was Mick who brought, in due course, the Troop back to the new Headquarters even though it was to be many months before all sections of the boathouse was completed.

One final note. We had been to a Ladies' Night and Mick had won a large Teddy Bear in the raffle. On the way out, he was asked if he would sell it. His reply was "£50 for the Leander funds". Yes, he got his £50. He had such a big heart which in the end let him down. He will be missed by so many.

Gordon K. Biden

Reorganisation

Obviously Mick's death means that a great deal of reorganisation will be necessary to cover the many jobs he did for the Group. As a start, from the New Year, Tim Pearce will be moving from Beavers to take over Cubs. Buffy Kimm has agreed to take out a Leader warrant for Beavers but we will need at least two (preferably three) additional Leaders for Beavers to continue. The Group waiting list for all sections is being taken on by Nigel Duffin (tel: 0181 977 8305) and John Hudson will be taking on the responsibility for subscription collection.

My thanks to the above for their offers of help and I look forward to hearing from anyone else who feels they can take on some of the many jobs which now need doing. (tel: 0181 399 5846)

Keith