



# The Water Rat

Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

March 1998

## Skipper's Scrawl

Firstly, I must give a very warm welcome to our four new Beaver leaders – Buffy Kimm, Claire Cockle, Stephen de Souza and Victoria Wood. They are now well settled in and organising a full programme for the Beavers.

Tim Pearce has taken over the Cub Pack and planned a very adventurous range of things for the Cubs to do. He has been able to get a number of parents to help on an occasional basis, but we still desperately need at least one more warranted leader in this section.

Well done to all the parents who turned up on a Saturday in February and, organised by Katie Grant, painted the Main Deck and did a lot of much-needed tidying in the back garden. I hope that we shall be able to get this ground grassed before the Summer, as that will make it more useful for activities. Katie has also agreed to get parental help in the Group rather better organised. Parent co-ordinators have been identified for each Section and after Easter you will be receiving from them a letter and form to complete. Increased support is essential to help our Leaders maintain an interesting and exciting programme.

Thanks also to Nick and Jan Wileman who have agreed to take over the task of termly sub collection for all sections of the Group. You should by now have had a letter from them explaining how the system will work. This has relieved the leaders of a chore and will enable them to devote more of their valuable time to the programme and training for the girls and boys.

We are now the largest Group in the Kingston and Malden District. I hope that we can show this at the St George's Day Parade this year with a full turnout from Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Ventures.

*Keith*

## Mick Chinnock (Chief)

Parents and friends at Leander,

We would like to say a very big *Thank You* for all your kind donations and support after the sad loss of Mick. We are sure he would never have believed how highly he was thought of and he would have been so proud.

At present, Leander has received the amazing sum of £2100 and we are all looking forward to a very smart bridge (balcony), of which Mick would thoroughly have approved.

*Jen, Liz and Ian Chinnock*

## Beavers

This is just a short note to say *Hello* to all the Beavers and their parents. I was just a Beaver mum until a few weeks ago. Being a little enthusiastic at turning up to Beaver meetings, when Tim moved on to Cubs, I was sort-of volunteered into becoming a Beaver leader. I really enjoy the task, but, as I am very busy, I decided that I couldn't do it alone. So there are now four Beaver leaders in all: myself, Victoria Ward, Claire Cockle and Steve de Souza. We rotate the meetings and two of us will always be there at any one meeting.

We hope to keep up the good work that Tim started, but I think he is a very hard act to follow. We will do our best, and try to have some interesting activities for the boys to undertake each week. I must say a hearty *Thank You* to Tim for all the help that he has given us in starting as leaders; I don't think we would have managed without him. Even though there are four of us, we will still need help from parents each week, so keep writing your names up in the lobby.

*Buffy*

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

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## Cubs

I have now been running the Cubs for almost a complete term. We currently have thirty two boys.

They are all working hard on their set badges as well as the activity badges. Each Six is working towards a badge and we are doing the community badge as a Pack. I hope to set up some visits away from the Headquarters and also get people in to help with talks and hands-on activities for the boys.

We are now running a points system for each Six, the aim being to have smart turn out, polished shoes and ironed clothes (done by the boys not Mum), and good behaviour. At the end of the term the winning Six will get a prize. Please help them to do their best.

On the point of help: I am sorry to have to have a moan, but I placed a list up at the start of term and asked for helpers at each meeting. This is not being filled in and I am running round trying to find help all the time. We have a hard core of helpers but they should not be asked all the time – they need a break as well. I have worked out that, to have four helpers per meeting, each cub will only need his Mum or Dad to help twice each term. The list is there – *please sign up*. If this does not happen I will make up a rota, post it on the notice board each term and it will be the responsibility of the parent to swap if they are unable to attend on the date they are shown. It is fun and we will be going out and about next term when the light is with us.

The boys do have a great time with us at the meetings, they are enjoying the games and badge work. Next term we are planning to have a sports day against a Brownie Pack from New Malden, including a barbecue. We also hope to visit a police station and a fire station, and go out for sports when it is lighter in the evenings. Watch this space for more later on these.

*Tim*

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## Coxswain's Corner

As usual, the Winter months are the main time for badge work and learning some of the essentials of seamanship. With a large, predominantly young, Troop, we have a lot doing their Scout award, Junior Seaman and Seaman badges, so I can report that

excellent progress has been made with a good number due to be awarded. The practical components of the various Seaman's badges will be completed as soon as we can get out on the water again. At least we should have a good showing for this year's Marshall Trophy. (This is awarded, on St George's Day, to the Troop who participated in the most camps and activities and gained the highest number of proficiency badges in the past year.)

*Please note:* Parents – do encourage your son or daughter in gaining badges, all they need to do is tell a Leader what badge they wish to obtain and we will provide all the assistance necessary

By popular request, we have modified the programme structure, so that the fourth week of the cycle (seamanship, games, badge work, special activity) now becomes organised activity, with two Patrols responsible for the activities that evening. These have included pizza and pancake making sessions, a formidable quiz, memory games and a few more strenuous inter-Patrol games.

Last November we were the only Scout Troop represented at Remembrance Sunday, and once again Leander was invited by the Mayor to distribute service sheets and assist in the Parish Church.

Another ice skating session was held at the Spectrum Centre, Guildford, always a popular activity. A party of Scouts and Ventures paid a visit to the Boat Show at Earl's Court just after Christmas – it is now absolutely vast, with every kind of boat on show, from inflatable canoes to ocean-going yachts. With tickets kindly supplied by one of the exhibitors, plus reduced train fares, it was a very economical outing.

One of our regular swimming sessions was timed to coincide with the redecorating of the Main Deck walls, so we were out of the painters' way and it now means we have a large number with their advanced swimmer's badge.

Winter Camp, organised by Michael and Jonathan as part of their Chief Scout Award, was held recently at Walton Firs, with a very good turn out of Scouts and Ventures, sixteen in all, who enjoyed same very mild weather and a range of activities (see report).

District Activities are somewhat constrained at the moment. The Night Hike, organised by another group, did not take place, so will hopefully be rescheduled for the Autumn.

The Troop has changed quite dramatically in the last few months. As mentioned before, we have a lot of young and very enthusiastic members, so we are slightly lacking in more experienced Scouts. Michael and Jonathan have become Senior Patrol Leaders, without Patrols but with plenty of experience. This means, for the first time in Leander's history, we now have three girls as Patrol Leaders – Emily, Ruth and Laura – who fully deserve their appointments.

Holding troop meetings, for Karen and myself, would be very difficult without the very able assistance that the Ventures have provided, both in helping to run the meetings and with instruction and supervision of badge work. Many thanks Alex, Alexis, Dave, Matt and Bassy.

*Coxswain*

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## *Walton Firs Winter Camp*

On Friday evening a group of Ventures, Seniors and older scouts arrived at Walton Firs campsite. We pitched our tents and started up a fire. For our meal that evening we had chicken stir fry, cooked by Karen and Michael. After a while the younger scouts went to bed. It was extremely cold that night.

In the morning we had a fry-up of eggs, bacon and beans. We then all went rifle shooting. The instructor was surprised to hear that all of us had done rifle shooting before. After lunch we played football, then went round an obstacle course, timing each other in pairs to see who could do the fastest time. There was a pool of water with a rope over it and Jack fell in because he didn't get a proper grip. After that we went off to the climbing wall, which was about 30ft high, you could climb up it and then abseil down. For our dinner we had spaghetti bolognese and we made a fire again and toasted marshmallows and had hot chocolate.

On Sunday morning we had a fry-up of sausages, eggs and mushrooms, then we went off to archery and after that packed away the tents. We left the campsite at about two o'clock.

I would like to say a big thank you to all the leaders and the scouts that organised the camp.

*George Michell, APL, Kingfisher Patrol.*

## *The Troop Charter*

At Leander, we have a flourishing and very active Scout Troop. Good behaviour from each individual is essential to the smooth running of meetings and the enjoyment of activities by everyone.

Most important of all, there is a serious and essential safety aspect. If we feel that certain Scouts do not listen to or pay attention to instructions from Leaders and Patrol Leaders, they will not be able to participate in boating activities.

A few months ago, we had a little trouble with some aspects of behaviour and discipline, from one particular age group. We have now discussed the issues and a real effort has been made to improve matters. As a consequence, the Patrol Leaders' Council and the Leaders have decided to draw up a Troop Charter. This will be a simple statement that requires every member of the Troop to respect certain basic requirements of discipline and behaviour. By putting these requirements in writing, every Scout will agree to abide by them and will be responsible for his or her own behaviour.

Once the Charter has been agreed and authorised by the Group, each Scout will receive a copy.

*Coxswain*

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## *Help needed with Troop*

We are desperately short of help in three key areas

### 1. Boat maintenance

Our boats get heavy use during the year, so it is essential that they are properly maintained during the Winter. Although we have been doing some essential work at Saturday meetings, such as fibre-glassing, sanding down, painting and varnishing, there are some jobs that cannot really be done then. If you can handle a saw, a drill or a plane, please get in touch and we can put your skills to use. The gigs and coypus are all maintained using traditional materials – mahogany, ash, brass screws and copper nails. Why not try copper nailing, a real boatbuilder's skill that is in regular demand? We need help to complete the following tasks for the boating season:

**Coypus:** Cut out, sand and varnish bottom boards, stretchers, stretcher chocks, centre board. Replace knees. Secure centre board housing. Renail crutch housings. Resecure thwarts. Renew copper nails. Renew fender screws.

**Home County Gigs :** Coat of varnish on all woodwork. Fit replacement sailing thwart. Renail crutch housings. Renew copper nails. Sand and paint fibreglass. Revarnish woodwork. Secure fender.

## 2. Supervision during boating activities

We are extremely fortunate to be situated so close to the river, the only problem until now has been watching the traffic on Lower Ham Road when handling boats in and out of the water. Since the cycle track down to Teddington Lock was finished, there has been a notable increase in cyclists. When there is fine weather, the number of cars has also increased.

With the large numbers we now have, we feel it is essential to have two traffic marshals on duty when boating, so that Leaders can concentrate on getting the boats out without having to constantly look out for cyclists and motorists. A rota system would mean that every parent would probably be required for two traffic duties in Summer and Autumn. You would also get the chance to see your son or daughter learning and applying the skills that Leander offers.

Parents, please fill in the rota form which will be distributed after Easter. This will be coordinated by Pat Pritchard to accommodate everyone.

## 3. Towing

It would be of great benefit if we knew how many parents have tow bars fitted to their cars. This would alleviate the last minute panic that often happens when we need to take the trailer to camp, or move heavy items around. Please fill in the box on the rota form.

*Coxswain*

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## *Venture Report*

In December, Asha organised within Leander the Group's contribution to the District Scout Post.

The Unit is now the proud owner of its own pool table, hand-crafted from MDF board, fitted with felt

and foam, etc. under the careful eye of Garry. This now resides in the newly-fitted Venture Den, but – be warned – those who enter, do so at their own peril!

Catering at the regular car-boot sales at the North Kingston Centre has expanded from bacon rolls to include hot chocolate, orange juice, Coke, biscuits and sweets, and there are plans to get an awning to protect the stall from bad weather.

The Ventures helped at the Winter Camp and held their own half-term camp at Polyapes – they are now experts on the geography of the Oxshott Woods area.

They continue to help with other sections of the Group and are all working towards their Venture Scout Award. It is even rumoured that some may be aiming towards their Chief Scout's Award by the Summer (*Shock Horror!!*)

Future plans include an Easter Camp, paragliding in May, helping on a County Night Exercise at Broadstone Warren.

Unit Officers are: Chair: Alex Newman, Treasurer: David King, Secretary: Alexis Childs, Under Secretary: Bassie Tindall.

*Ness*

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## *Billy Manning (1931-1998)*

Those who have had a long association with Leander will have been very sad to hear of the sudden death in January of William (Billy) Manning. He was a Cub at 3rd Kingston, but joined the Troop at Leander in 1943. He was an extremely loyal and determined individual and, as such, soon became a natural leader, passing from Patrol Leader to the Rover Crew via the Senior Patrol and thence into National Service with the Navy.

He represented the UK in the first post-war Jamboree in France and was one of a hundred Sea Scouts chosen to assist in the chores and organisation of the 1948 Sailing Olympic Games at Torquay.

He spent many a happy hour with Leander 'messaging around in boats', and was instrumental in involving Leander in the Great River Race, being one of the original gig's crew members.

*Keith Quinnon (from the Leander Guild News Letter)*