



The Water Rat

Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

October 2002

editor – Nigel Duffin

Skipper's Scrawl

In this edition you will be able to read a report of the Troop summer camp in Holland, which turned out to be a rather wet and windy but, I understand, very enjoyable. We had only just got over drying out the tents after family camp and were then faced with an HQ full of wet canvas again. September started with the Great River Race when we had a total of six of our gigs plus two borrowed boats leave HQ for a late start (four boats from Kingston Rotary Club, an under-14 and under-16 crew from the Scouts, a Venture crew and, of course, the parents, otherwise known as The Mutineers). Well done everyone who took part especially the under-14s, who came second in their class, and the Parents who came second in the Scout affiliated class. It was almost dark when we reached Greenwich and we were all pleased to be able to board the bus for the return to Kingston and the customary celebratory meal at the HQ. Thanks to the Rotary for organising the meal and particular thanks to Neil, Robin and Roger for towing the boats back after the race, returning to Kingston at about 4.00am!

Regrettably, this year the Guild did not take part because of one of the wooden gigs undergoing a major refit. 'Active' came back from the boat builders last week, and has had six new planks inserted, twenty-two new ribs fitted and a new keel. It was about 25 years ago that the last major repairs

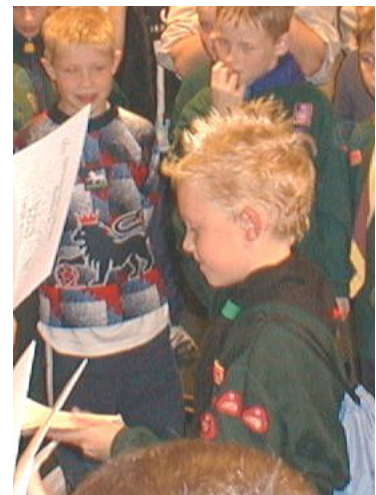
were done, so hopefully this will now last us another 25 years. In total the cost of repair is £3400 and we are thankful to members of the Guild who are putting up a loan to the group to pay for the repair, allowing us to have the use of the boat whilst raising the funds to pay for it. We are fortunate that The Rowan Bentall Trust has given our fund raising a kick-start with a donation of £250 toward the repairs and we will shortly be calling for everyone's help to raise the balance.

As reported in the last *Water Rat*, there have been a number of changes in the Leadership team to enable us to launch the new Explorer section. I am pleased that Karen has agreed to take on this new section, and we hope to be linking a lot more in future with Surbiton and the District to increase the activities and opportunities. However it does still leave us overstretched in the other sections and we must recruit further help. Particularly important is the need for another Beaver leader and, because we have girls in Cubs, a female Cub leader. Please let me know if you are able to help or want further detail before committing yourself!

I went to Teddington baths to see the Beavers in action at their first swimming session and must commend Maggie on getting every Beaver to jumping in at the deep end. I must stress to all Beaver and Cub parents

the importance of achieving a 50-metre swimming standard as, without being able to swim, the boys and girls will not be able to join our Scout section and benefit from being able to use the Group's boats. This of course leads on to congratulate the Scouts who won the District Swimming Gala and also to the Cubs who came second. I should mention however that, in the true spirit of Scouting, the Cubs 'lent' the winning group two team swimmers, so this must have given the judges a dilemma in awarding the first place.

Keith



James Kimber receives his individual award at the Swimming Gala, with some of the Cub team in the background.

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

Headquarters: 92 Lower Ham Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey
Telephone: 020 8549 6286 — www.leanderss.free-online.co.uk



NaWaKa 2002 – an epic trip!



Three Sea Scout Groups wanted to go to NaWaKa, so we thought: let's put them together in one big happy family. Little did we realise, as we stated planning, that we were in for an epic trip. Petersham and Ham, 1st Surbiton (Sealions), and Leander would travel together and share equipment. We had been allocated two sites close together, one for the Ventures and one for the Scouts, which sounded ideal. NaWaKa, at Roermond in the far South East of Holland, attracts over 5,000 Sea Scouts and spreads over two miles of lakeside, old gravel workings now given over to leisure use, connected to an extremely busy River Maas and the national canal network.

It's a long camp, with a day's travel at each end and a lot of kit to move around. The Saturday before our departure saw a 40ft trailer loaded up with a gig, coypu, topper, canoes, buoyancy aids, tentage, cooking equipment and 50 odd persons' rucksacks. On the Monday, 49 scouts and 9 leaders set off in a luxury double-decker coach, with a small advance party having left by car on an earlier ferry.

On arrival we could not see the trailer parked in its usual place. The advance party found that the trailer was not allowed on site and had been parked at a farm some 8km away. With great good fortune managed to get Feltham Sea Scouts' truck to transfer the camp kit on to two sites. Our Scout subcamp, Doldrums, had now been moved to

the farthest corner of the site, over 30 minutes walk away, which meant sharing boats and equipment was going to be most interesting. The space allocated to us for a marquee, eight patrol tents and six hike tents was minute, but we managed by a miracle of crossed guy lines and squeezing the space to get everyone in.

The Ventures were equally cramped: their whole area though looked like a cross between an African Village and a Mad Max movie set, with many original structures and decoration.

The camp organisation was quite amazing, with a complete headquarters for each sub camp, first aid stations, cafés and discotheques spread throughout the site. All the food for 5,500 people, was delivered to a central supermarket, with the next day's menu printed in the daily camp newspaper. Each afternoon a couple of Leaders would take the 'bathtub', Sealion's 10ft work boat, motor round the headland and collect six very heavy crates of food.



We had got the tents pitched and shipshape then it was off to the opening ceremony, which sees everyone towed up Roermond in Lelyflats. The town is full to the brim with very noisy Scouts and loud music.

We had to get our boats and canoes off the trailer a couple of days later – a day was spent with tractors and trailers and additional camp staff going backwards and forwards helping to get everything into the water.

For the Scouts, NaWaKa is unique, with dozens of different activities, especially learning how to sail and pull a Lelyflat, the steel built boat (technically a scow) all the Dutch Sea Scouts use. With water races, water hikes, treasure hunts, central market activities and making friends with the Dutch, the days were very full.

Our big trip out, by popular request, was to Effterling, an amazing theme park which made Chessington World of Adventure look rather tacky. There were lots of rides but of course, everybody went on the big roller coaster, which was very fast, went upside down, looped the loop and rearranged your insides! This was followed, naturally, by large portions of chips with mayonnaise.

Then of course, there was THE STORM! It was a quiet afternoon, all the scouts had gone up river by boat to a small village, just time for those leaders staying behind to take it easy



for a few hours. I had been out sailing the gig when suddenly the sky went very black and a strong wind came up from nowhere. The wind got stronger, all around people were securing boats and tents, the police were getting every vessel off the water and I needed four passing Scouts to help get the gig sails and mast down. Back at the site, the wind just tore through the tents; the dining shelters and pergolas took off and disappeared, whilst at least thirty Dutch scouts and leaders appeared, secured the patrol tents, stowed all the loose gear away and hung on to the marquee for about twenty minutes until the storm passed. Without their help we would have probably lost the marquee and a few tents. Luckily damage was minimal, a few ripped flysheets and torn guys, up at the central market, though, some of the large prefabricated building had collapsed and the site looked very much worse for wear. During this time the boats towing the Scouts had driven hard up the river bank and all the Scouts had gone below deck whilst the wind howled around.

We did get a lot more rain after that, which meant that at the end of the camp, all the tents were packed up wet. As the ground was so soft, tractors and trailer were hired from local farmers to take all the kit up to the entrance. We then had to transfer it to Feltham's lorry and then take that to

the farm where the large trailer was parked. The Ventures stayed at the farm loading, whilst the Scouts got the kit on and eventually loaded the boats on; in all it took five trips to ferry everything across. To add to our toils, all the water and toilet services were stripped out of our site and we had to repitch the marquee, in which everyone was sleeping for the last night, at the entrance. With sodden canvas, pitching that was really hard work. We then had to go back and help Feltham load their kit – we are indebted to them for their assistance.

There were some very tired people that night; I don't think so much humping of kit and boats has been done in the space of a few hours.

As soon as the coach arrived next morning, we were loaded and away very quickly, with that unique atmosphere coming back from camp on a coach – everyone asleep within minutes.

All in all it was a great event and well worth attending. The NaWaKa organisation wasn't quite as crisp as before, lots of very helpful people but not sufficient experience or understanding of the practical requirements of groups coming from abroad. Will there be a next time? Of course, and we can use our experience to organise certain practical elements in our favour. Here's to NaWaKa 2005.

Coxswain

Mutineers Ahoy

As the nights draw in, the river becomes a quiet and dark place, but every week a ghostly shape can be seen gliding upstream (displaying lights of course!). Yes, it's the Mutineers, out for their regular Thursday evening row. This stalwart band of Leander parents and Leaders will continue honing their skills, both in the gig and selected hostelrys, as long as the water and weather is favourable. They will, however, soon be transferring their skills indoors to the boatdeck and will

Explorers? – Yes!

Another summer camp over!
Another Autumn term begins!
Another NEW section opens!
Welcome to all Leander Explorers!

“Leander has an Explorers Scout Unit?” you may ask? Our answer would be “YES!”

We have been running since the beginning of September, but a lot of open thinking and talking between the Explorers and myself has taken place to arrange a number of new and exciting activities. As the official opening of all Explorer units has not yet taken place throughout the Kingston & Malden and Surbiton Districts, we have decided to run on our own free will.

The Explorer Unit will meet every two weeks on a Thursday (7.30 till 9.30) and meetings will be held at our HQ.

Over the few weeks that we have been running, I am glad to say we have had 100% participation from each member. So far we have cleaned the side entrance of the HQ and scrubbed off tents, we have had an international take away evening. A night out to Richmond Park to play some games and make friends with the Park Police and the week ending 25th October they will be doing their first of many back-to-basic weekend camps.

Finally, I would like to say well done all the Explorers and thank you to Matt Freeman and John Beddingfield (from Surbiton Sealion) for taking part in this year's Great River Race, and coming 9th & 4th in their classes.

Karen Loizou (ESL)

be doing some essential gig maintenance.

The other good news is that a potential ladies' crew has tested the water a couple of times and has their sights set on next year's Great River Race – all they need now is a suitable name.

Coxwain's Corner

Once again we have had a very busy summer, with our trip to NaWaKa in the Netherlands – that's all in the special report – and all sorts of activities this Autumn.

We kicked off with the Great River Race in early September, this year with a very late start and a good tide. All the teams put in some good times and reached Island Gardens, Greenwich, before darkness fell.

The first Troop meeting of the new term after the race saw the arrival of five enthusiastic Cubs and one girl – welcome to Alex Barley, Oliver Biddulph, Harry Maguire, Rhys Steele, Jonathan Smith and Eleanor Byrd – they will be the first Scouts to work through the new awards and badges.

The end of the month saw two teams off to HMS Excellent, Portsmouth, for the RN Recognised Sea Scout six-a-side football tournament. The standard gets higher every year and both teams played their best; our seniors were not quite as good as the excellent Leander Team who won the trophy last year – still, they made the semi-finals. Staying on HMS Bristol is a unique experience and makes a great weekend for everyone.

The District Swimming Gala was just a couple of weeks ago, which Leander won for the second year in succession – very well done to all those who took part. A well attended practice session at Richmond pool the week before obviously helped. For those old enough to remember (before my time!) Leander used to have a Group Swimming Gala which would be nice to reinstate if a reasonably priced venue can be found – watch this space.

At the end of half term, Leander was wardening at Polyapes District Camp site with all the Explorers going on a back-to-basics camp.

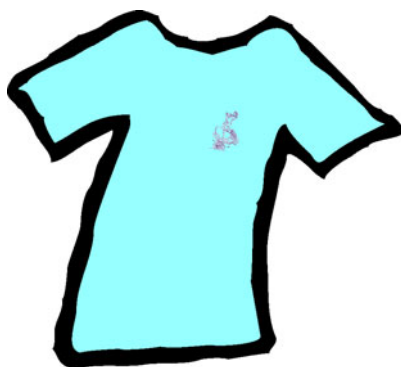
There are a number of events which we did not participate in this Autumn, the County Camping Standards Com-

petition and the National Scout Air Rifle Championships in particular. With school work/sports demands, the introduction of the new programme and the establishment of new sections we decided to concentrate on a few selected activities. Leaders' and Scouts' time is increasingly under pressure; we want to enjoy what we do and do it well.

With the changes to two sections, Scouts and Explorers, we are gradually introducing the new programme and the substantially changed requirements for awards and badges. There are many good things in the programme and resource material, but as an active Sea Scout group we have to take a clear position on the requirements for activity badges and awards. The emphasis now is on participation rather than meeting certain standards or requirements, but where necessary we will amend any badge/awards so they continue to meet Leander safety and skills standards. Safe boating and good water based skills go hand in hand and are the foundation of our activities.

Coxwain

T shirts



Leander T shirts are now available to all Beavers and Cubs. Sizes are small and medium and the cost is £5. Please phone Karen (07909 968 382) to order one.

Working Parties

Don't forget – we rely on you to keep the HQ 'ship-shape'! Please note, we've had to make a few changes in Jan & Feb to take account of changing personnel.

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. This rota started in September.

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

Nov 10 – *Kersey, King, Lafon, Lear

Nov 24 – *Lightfoot, Maguire, Manson, McDonagh

Dec 8 – *McGuinness, Mellett, Merridan, Mitchell

Jan 12 – *Osborne, Ozdilli, Paintin, Pearn, Peto

Jan 26 – *Pratt, Smith, Steele, Walters

Feb 9 – *Whitfield, Wingrove, Woods, Young

Dates for your Diary

Nov 10 – HQ Working Party:

*Kersey, King, Lafon, Lear

Nov 10 – Remembrance Sunday Parade (Explorers & PLs)

Nov 16/17 – Explorer Maountain Weekend, Bethesda

Nov 18 – Executive Meeting, 8pm

Nov 23/24 – District Night Hike

Nov 24 – HQ Working Party:

*Lightfoot, Maguire, Manson, McDonagh

Nov 29 – Quiz Night, 7.45pm

Dec 1 – County Orienteering Comp.

Dec 8 – HQ Working Party:

*McGuinness, Mellett, Merridan, Mitchell

Dec 11 – District Chess Comp.