



The Water Rat

Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

March 2004

editor – Nigel Duffin

Skipper's Scrawl

First of all, thanks to those parents who helped to finish getting the Boat Deck ship-shape again and sorting out the racking just in time for the delivery of the first two new Coypu dinghies. I am sure the Scouts can't wait for their 'maiden voyage'. Hopefully, the next two will be delivered in early June and we can then sort out the sailing gear for them. Regrettably, the second wooden gig 'Alert' is leaking badly and we suspect there is some rot in the transom and keel. Gordon Biden has now trailed the gig back to Norwich for a full inspection and quotation for refurbishment and, at present, I am still awaiting the verdict on her condition. On a brighter note, our thanks are due to Brian Wright and Les Hodges from Kingston Rotary Club who have made a superb job of refurbishing one of the fibreglass gigs and set the benchmark for those parents who have just started on the second fibreglass gig. The Guild has also undertaken to re-varnish 'Active' and so by the beginning of the season we should have all our boats in top condition.

The Thames Sea Scout Forum has started on organising training courses and by the middle of April virtually all our Leaders and Explorers will have completed First Aid courses and we have also held our first seamanship/pulling course. We have been helped in this with a grant from the Royal Navy to purchase resuscitation dum-

mies for use at our courses and these will be held by individual groups for day-to-day training practice at Troop and Explorer meetings. Now all that remains is a final check and sorting of the camping gear and I await with interest the threatened clear out of the Cub/Beaver office by the Beaver Leaders.

As Cub parents will know, Keith Aldred is standing down as a leader and I am sure you will all wish to join me in thanking Keith for all the work he has put into Cubs. Steve will also be standing down at the end of July so we are keen to recruit new Cub leaders. Please phone either Steve or myself if you are able to help.

We are pleased to welcome back Dave King now he has finished at university and I know Robin and his team will welcome his help with the Troop.

St George's Day Parade this year is on Sunday 25th April, in St James' Church, Bodley Road, New Malden. I hope all Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers will be able to attend, as this is one time when all our sections can get together as a complete Group.

Meet at Blagdon Road car park, New Malden at 2.20 pm (by New Malden Centre swimming pool). The parade will finish in Presburg Road at about 4.30pm. All Bea-

vers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers to be in full uniform. Cubs/Beavers to wear grey trousers/skirts, if possible. Black shoes preferably, but definitely no trainers.

There will be a rehearsal for all standard bearers on Thursday 22nd at 7pm in St James' Church.

Finally, another date for your diaries – the Group AGM will be held on Monday the 24th of May at 8pm and this will be a chance for all parents and supporters to come and hear what we have planned for the coming year and have a chance to put any questions you have to the Leader Team.

Keith



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County Night Hike

a.k.a. Map reading madness on Box Hill – Saturday 13th of March

This year's event was held at Boiderhurst on Box Hill and once again proved to be a well organised and challenging event. Leander entered two teams of Scouts (building on last year's entry of one), eleven participants in all, accompanied by Coxswain, Ian and Dave. All arrived in good time to pitch camp (only the really hardy groups stay overnight) on some very wet ground before getting ready for the off. Over 40 teams took part in the hike, setting out at five minute intervals from 5.30pm and then covering a course which took about four hours to walk with five checkpoints on the way. Some of the checkpoints required tasks to be completed and points are awarded for completeness of kit, number of tasks completed and time taken overall.

The walk involved some road work and then substantial sections in woodland following pathways. Good map-reading was essential, along with teamwork, and both Leander teams were a credit to the Group, finishing in good spirits in 16th and 25th places. As a quarter of the teams entered dropped out over the course of the event this emphasises how well our scouts did, particularly as we had such a mix of age and abilities represented within the teams.

The leaders' jobs seemed cushy this year as Coxswain had secured inside tasks for himself and Ian (tea and cakes on tap) but dismay set in as they were turfed out to man a checkpoint until 2.00am. Never has a bowl of chilli tasted so good in the middle of the night.

A tired but cheery group then retired to the tents, lulled to sleep by lashing rain and awoken – not by the dawn chorus – but by the girls' tent chattering at 05.45. Tell me again why we stayed?

Ian

Explorers have a Term of Ups & Downs

This term I would have to admit has not quite gone to plan, due to several meetings being cancelled or postponed. But I would imagine this is not just the case for Leander but with other units and their members sitting their mock exams.

Once again with thanks to Steadfast Sea Cadets, the Unit has been able to use their rifle range to get a little bit more shooting practice in. But with a few more practice sessions, hopefully some of the Unit could have ago at gaining their Master At Arms badge and possibly taking part in this year's National Air Rifle Competition.

Congratulation to the first seven members of the unit on passing their RYA First Aid course in January, and good luck to the final two of you that are due to attend the course on the 17th April at Ajax Sea Scouts HQ.

For one week in February we got a little bit serious and did a little task call 'When I'm Gone', which consisted of them designing a tomb stone for themselves and a friend. But I am glad to say that the sense of humour the Unit shone through.

This term we also went back to basic nautical skills, for a bit of a refresher and practice on what they know.

I am glad to say that all of the Explorers' hard work on planning this year's Easter Camp has paid off. Hopefully over the first weekend of April we will have about 20 people attending camp at Easter for the first time in a long while, with the Explorers passing on their knowledge and advising first-time campers on how to pitch tents, start fires and to be a good camp Patrol Leader.

Thank you to three of the Unit members and Matt King on helping at this year's County Night Hike up at Box Hill, with a little guidance to lost and unsure Scouts to the next check point. And well done to Nick Pratt and Zoe Steele on getting their teams around the course – but with a little help from the Explorers.

Finally the Unit would like to welcome Alon Aviram, Tom Chapman and Jed Wingrove from the Troop, and hope to see you all after Easter.

Happy Easter.

Kaz

Mutineers' Mutterings

The Mutineers are working on one of the gigs, stripping back the woodwork, preparing her for coating with marine sealer. A new flexible product is being used which hopefully is much easier to apply and will last longer than traditional varnish. We are also ready for our regular Thursday night sessions, rowing up river and visiting the occasional hostelry. If any parent fancies a row out, contact Ian Chappell or Coxswain.



Beavers

The Beavers have been working towards their stage one swimming badges. They have also been working towards their creative badges. We have seen some great performances from them including singing songs, telling jokes, doing magic tricks, reciting poems and listening to them playing musical instruments.

The Beavers have also been busy making Valentine's Day cards, Mothers' Day cards and Easter egg pictures. They did well to find every one of the Easter eggs in their Easter egg hunt, as we had hidden 66!

A fourth Generation

I'm sure that this article, pirated from the January 2004 Leander Guild Newsletter, will interest Water Rat readers. George Goodall, the writer, is the Group Treasurer.

When Scouting first started in Kingston, my father, George Goodall, joined the 2nd Kingston Troop under Eric Robinson, the first GSM [Group Scout Master]. When Eric was called up for the First World War, my father stood in as Assistant Scout Master until he was also called up.

After the War, the Troop was re-named 'Leander' under its second GSM, Eric Ebbage. I joined Leander Cubs in 1936, with Mrs Myers as Cub Master, until it was shut down due to the Second World War. E.L.E. [Eric Ebbage] asked me to join the Troop in 1939.

In 1946 I joined the Deep Sea Scouts when I was called up to the Fleet Air Arm until 1949.

Back in the Troop, I had an ASM [Assistant Scout Master] warrant from 1950 until 1953 and then an ARL [Assistant Rover Leader] warrant until Rovers were disbanded. Leander Rovers became Leander B.P. Guild until Guilds were also not recognised by Scout HQ, so we became independent, as Leander Guild.

Approaching retirement as GSL in 1968, E.L.E. asked me if I would be Group Treasurer, which I have now been for 35 years.

During this time, the Group has raised over £200,000 for the new HQ, purchased new Gigs, and financed countless other projects, as well as the everyday running of the Group.

In 1985 I was awarded the Medal of Merit, in April 1994 a Long Service Award, and in September 1994 a 25 year Bar to the Award.

My son Andrew was in the Troop for 3-4 years and his son Zack joined the Beavers and is now a Second in the Cubs. A fourth generation Goodall in the Group.

George Goodall



Cubs do it themselves

This half term at Cubs we have completed two interesting badges which are very varied. Firstly, Keith took everyone's lives in his hands with the DIY badge, letting the Cubs loose on saws, drills and wallpaper. Should the hall ever want to look like a complete mess, the Cubs are the team to do it!



We were visited by Thomas Harrison's grandfather for our Local Knowledge badge. He took us through his memories of Kingston in the war and the post-war years, which must have been enthralling, since the Cubs kept quiet through the whole session! Finally we

are saying goodbye to Keith Aldred, who has been the stalwart of the Beavers and Cubs for the past three years.

I shall miss him, and am looking for volunteers to take his place. All parents are invited to an important meeting after the first cubs meeting on the 28th April to discuss how we go from here. We wish Keith all the best and thank him for his efforts.

We are also saying goodbye to Max Foster, Jonathan Edwards and Zoe D'Souza. Zoe will be the first girl in Leander to have come through the ranks of Beavers and Cubs, since she was also the first girl Beaver in Leander.

We start back for the Summer term on the 28th of April.

Steve

Dates for your Diary

- April 2/5 – Explorers' Easter Camp at Chalfont Heights
- April 19 – Executive meeting, 8pm
- April 20 – Troop meetings start
- April 22 – Rehearsal for St George's Day Parade standard bearers, 7pm, St James' Church
- April 25 – HQ Working Party: *Foster, Freeman, Gardener, Geraghty, Goodall
- April 25 – St George's Day Parade, Blagdon Road car park, New Malden, 2.20 pm
- April 28 – Pack meetings start & meeting for Cub parents
- May 9 – HQ Working Party: *Harrison, Hazard, Hearn, Howe, Kersey
- May 23 – HQ Working Party: *King, Lawley-Gibbs, Lear, MacAllister, Manson
- May 24 – Leander AGM, 8pm
- June 21 – Executive meeting, 8pm
- July 3/4 – National Sea Scout & Sea Ranger Regatta
- July 25 – August 1 – Troop Summer Camp

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.

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. A new rota starts at the end of February.

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

April 25 – *Foster, Freeman,
Gardener, Geraghty, Goodall
May 9 – *Harrison, Hazard, Hearn,
Howe, Kersey
May 23 – *King, Lawley-Gibbs,
Lear, MacAllister, Manson
June 13 – *McDonagh,
McGuinness, Pearn, Peto, Pope
June 27 – *Pratelli, Pratt, Pratt,
Sankey, Sibley
July 11 – *Smith, Steele, Troullides,
Waller, Walters
September – *Webb, Wheller,
Whitfield, Wingrove, Woods



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Coxswain's Corner

As usual, the Troop has been busy with a wide range of activities. Everything from learning seamanship skills, to making signal flag messages, solving matchstick puzzles, street navigation exercises and a patrol cooking competition.

One of the bonuses of the Winter season, whilst meetings are held inside, is that there are also quite a number of Scouting events to take part in, at District, County and National level. The Joint District Chess competition, postponed from before Christmas, duly took place at 1st Hook; well done to Jonathan Smith, Sam Aldred and James Kimber for taking part. The competition is very intense, with some excellent players and we were close, but not enough to hold on to the trophy we won last year.

A swimming team was selected after one of our regular sessions at Richmond Pool, ready for the long journey to HMS Raleigh at Plymouth, for the Royal Navy Swimming Gala. It's a packed weekend of swimming heats, five-a-side football and seamanship activities, intensely competitive with many top quality swimmers. Our team did their very best, thanks to Hannah Pratt, James Kimber, Andrew Chappell, Nick Pratt, Chris Morrissey and Tom Chapman.

On the same weekend, whilst we were away with the Navy, Zoe Steele and Matty Biddulph did brilliantly, beat-

ing over 35 other teams to take the County Cooking Competition trophy – a great result. We always have a Patrol cooking competition before the event, which is really good practise. Each Patrol, working to a fixed budget, has to prepare and cook a three course meal, observing proper hygiene and presentation. All parents would be delighted to see the very high standard of cuisine on offer – hope you see some of it at home!

The County Night Hike, based around Boidierhurst Camp site on Box Hill, saw over 45 teams navigating the wilds of Box Hill and Headley Heath at the beginning of March. Our two teams managed to get very slightly lost but completed the course in good time. Camping out overnight (blessed with torrential rain) helped add essential character to the event. The hardy souls involved were Zoe Steele, Alon Aviram, Chris Morrissey, Matty and Ollie Biddulph, Hannah and Nick Pratt, Rachel Bungey, Lizzie MacAllister, Andrew Chappell and Alistair Exworthy. Coxswain, Dave King and Ian Chappell were amongst 60 other adults involved checking teams, manning controls and assisting with the event.

As Easter approaches and the nights get longer, everyone is looking forward to once again getting out on the water.

Coxswain

