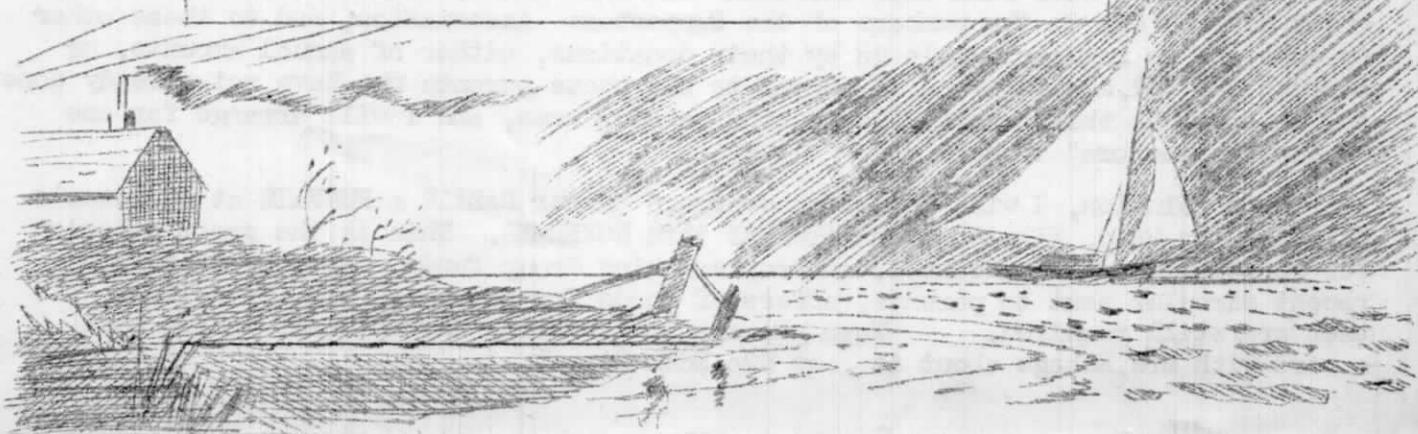


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Edited by:-
45, Dysart Avenue,

F.C. Goodger
Kingston



SKIPPER'S SCRAWL.

I am glad, at last, to have this opportunity of writing to you all again. 1957 has been a crowded year of Scouting activity, and one result of this has been a long gap since the last issue of the "Water Rat". The great events of the summer are now only memories, but I am sure that these will continue to inspire and encourage us for a long time to come.

During the past few weeks there have been the customary "migrations" from the Cub Pack to the Scout Troop, from the Scout Troop to the Seniors, and thence to the Rover Crew. This has created vacancies in the Cub Pack which have now been filled from the "waiting list". To these new members we say "Welcome", and may they in their turn pass by stages to the other Sections of the Group. We trust all the "new boys" in the various Sections have now settled down to making the most of their new opportunities, whether for work or play.

Our regular feature "HEARD IN THE FO'C'SLE" has been squeezed out of this issue so it falls to me to congratulate "Cyril" and Margaret Fletcher on the arrival of Colin Michael in July. "Cyril" is at present serving in H.M.S. WAVE. Our congratulations also to A/S/M David Blundell and A/C/M Barbara Deluce who were married on the 7th September.

Those who have not already had a copy of the Group Accounts for the year ended 31st March last, will find them included with this issue. From this will be seen the great debt we owe to the members of the Supporters Association, and to those other friends who so regularly help us by their donations, either of annual amounts, or through the "6d. a week" fund. I appeal to all those parents who have not already done so, to enrol in this scheme. Please send me your name, and I will arrange for one of our "collectors" to call.

In conclusion, I wish to remind everyone of our BAZAAR & FUNFAIR at St. Peter's Hall, London Road, Kingston, on SATURDAY 16th NOVEMBER. This is the great occasion for renewing acquaintanceships, and replenishing Group funds. As mentioned in a recent circular sent to parents, offers of goods for sale, and help in selling them are still required. When you are in Kingston, why not call in and have a word with Mrs. Ebbage about it, at 82a Eden Street.

The bowler hats, brief cases, and umbrellas which normally go to town from Kingston Station about 8 a.m., were somewhat surprised on Friday 9th August, to see the platform crowded with Cubs, Scouts and their parents from Kingston and adjacent districts, waiting for the special excursion train to the Jamboree. British Railways provided some of its better rolling stock for the occasion, and we (Flan, Bob Shackleton, Arthur and the Writer, who shall remain anonymous) selected a first-class carriage for the journey. We were somewhat flattered when a small Malden Scout, seeing us in such dignified surroundings, requested our autographs!

At Clapham Junction a further contingent from Staines joined the train and thereafter we sped quickly up the centre of England, passing considerable stretches of the Grand Union Canal. We looked in vain, however, for a sight of the Troop working the many locks on their return cruise from Birmingham. One member of our party had thoughtfully provided himself with plenty of literature for the journey, including his book of English Grammar, and under our expert tuition his spelling had improved no end by the time we got to Sutton Coldfield!

As we believe is customary in those Midland areas, it was pouring with rain when we came out of the station. However, it was only a short distance to one of the main entrances to Sutton Park where Keith (taking a day off from collecting gate-money) met us and showed us a tent in which we sheltered and had our lunch. By then the skies had cleared a little and we set off to explore. Sutton Park is some three miles long and two miles broad, so it took some walking to get around. We went up past the swimming pool (one of six lakes in the Park) and came to Vogelenzang, one of the five Jamboree Sub-Camps, each of which contained about 150-170 troops complete with ablution areas, stores, rest tents, and other administrative facilities. Each Sub-Camp contained a number of troops from several of the countries sending representatives to the Jamboree so there was no question of Scouts from one part of the world being all together in one Sub-Camp. Each Sub-Camp too was named after the place of a past Jamboree, thus, in addition to Vogelenzang (Holland 1937) there were Copenhagen (1924) Arrow Park (U.K. 1929), Godollo (Hungary 1933) and Moisson (France 1947). In addition to the Jamboree for Scouts, there was a Rover Scout Moot, the Sub-Camp of which was Bad Ischl (Austria 1951) and an Indaba for Scouters, Niagara on the Lake (Canada 1955). Practically all camp sites had decorative entrance gateways, some of them very ingeniously constructed. To enter Copenhagen Sub-Camp for example, one passed under a

replica of a Viking ship, while the entrance to one of the London camp sites, was a model of Tower Bridge, complete with elevating roadways. Passing through Vogelenzang, we came to the focal point of the Jamboree, where, on slightly raised ground there was a huge revolving globe set on a pedestal some 12ft. high. From here it was possible to get a good bird's eye view of Sutton Park, and to appreciate the size of the Jamboree site. Near this focal point was the shopping centre which contained not only shops selling most necessities, but banks, and a post office as well. In a large marquee close by, was an Exhibition designed to give overseas Scouts and visitors some idea of British industry. We went in here and tested some of the electrical products of the Bosun's firm (George Ellisdon, Ltd). We heard subsequently that the firm considered if its equipment could stand up to twelve days' testing by Scouts, it could stand up to anything! Next door was the B.P. Pavilion - an exhibition of the life and work of B.P., and of the growth of the Scout Movement.

We then went on to the Arena, where all the main functions of the Jamboree took place and where, each afternoon, the various national contingents gave displays. The afternoon we were there it was the turn of Australia, South Africa, and Luxembourg. The first two were mainly in the form of pageants depicting the development of the countries concerned, and in the case of Australia, ended with a representation of the Woomera Rocket Range. The South African display ended with a very beautiful parade of Basuto blankets made in an incredible variety of colours and designs and carried by all the Scouts taking part. A surprising number of Scouts from Luxembourg filled the arena, portraying some episodes in the history of their country, and demonstrated their national dances.

From there we went on to Moisson Sub-Camp, hoping to see "Tacky", but found his troop had gone out for the day on a sight-seeing tour to Sheffield. However we met the leader of the Surrey contingent (Mr. Gover, A.C.C. Senior Scouts) and "Rusty", G/S.M. of 1st Kingston Hill. Next, we looked for "Dai" Evans, but although we found his fire engine, he too was away. By this time heavy rain and a thunder-storm or two had set in, so we took shelter in one of the well-equipped U.S.A. Camp sites. We had hoped to see Akela, who was attending the Indaba, but were deterred when we saw the distance we would have to go through driving rain to reach
(contd. on page 7)

ARMY LIFE IN NORTH AFRICA.

Early one grey September morning last year, there was one radiographer in the R.A.M.C., who was not very pleased with life. Together with thirty other unfortunates, I was on my way by air to the Cyrenaica District of Libya. However, it was not until some ten days later when I had settled in that I was able to take a good look round and see what I had volunteered for. Derna, where we were based, is situated on the Mediterranean coast some 160 miles from the Egyptian border, and lies on the main road between Tobruk and Benghazi. Tobruk is situated about 100 miles from Derna is the deep-water harbour of Cyrenaica where both military and civil supplies arrive, subsequently being transported by motor transport, camel, or mule to their destinations. This famous town still carries the battle scars of its sieges. Around the town are the Commonwealth, French, German, and Italian war cemeteries. These memorials stand isolated in the hot sun, yet remain the most coldly impressive sights I have ever seen. Two other noted places are Cyrene and Apollonia, both sites of Greek and Roman civilisations. Many of the ruins of the latter town are now beneath the sea and are gradually being worn away by the tireless waves. Ras el Hilal is a beauty spot some 30 miles along the coast from Derna and during the war was used as a German submarine base.

The native population of the country is Arab, and outside the towns one meets the Bedouin or nomadic Arabs who live in tents and move from place to place. Public transport in these parts is not all it might be. The most popular and cheapest conveyance is the gharry, an open carriage drawn by a rather bedraggled and very thin horse. It is always wise to agree the price of the journey with the driver before one starts, and it is surprising how much reduction in fare one can obtain by a certain amount of bargaining. There is a taxi service, but it is somewhat expensive.

The Arab's beast-of-burden is undoubtedly the mule, although the Bedouins seem to prefer the single-humped camel. A combination of these two, with the inclusion of either a horse or cow, forms the Arab's thrashing machine. The corn is laid in a circle, and the three animals are roped together in ascending order. The Arab stands in the middle of the corn and makes the animals walk around him and the pounding of their feet causes the corn to become separated from the straw. Except in the very fertile Barca plain there is not much land suitable for farming, owing to the rocky ground. Most Arab farmers, however, seem to grow enough to feed their families, with a little over which is sold in the "suk" as the local market is called. The main crop is

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barley which is harvested by the end of June. By this time most of the spring and early summer flowers are over, leaving the ground bare except for tufts of coarse grass. When the flowers are in bloom during the early part of the year they are really beautiful the more so as they brighten an otherwise almost barren countryside.

The rainy season begins in December and lasts for about three months. Although it does not rain continuously, when it does come down there are no half-measures about it. A cold wind blows from the sea during the winter months, and can be very unpleasant but by no means so discomforting as the hot wind which blows from the desert and is called the "ghibli". When this wind is blowing, the air becomes hot and makes breathing quite an effort. During the summer months, temperatures often rise to 120°F. but it is not oppressively hot as the heat is dry.

Entertainment had to be of one's own making. The sea really is blue, and warm, but as the stretch of coast near Derna is reputed to be the most dangerous in this part of the world, a seven mile trip along the coast had to be made for swimming. One activity which more or less held its own as a pastime among the hospital staff was walking. The "wadi" or river was usually the goal. During the summer months it became a mere trickle or dries up altogether, while in the rainy season it can be a raging torrent. There are cliffs on either side of the river bed, and it was quite arduous climbing them. The main attraction of these cliffs, especially in August, was the grape vines. We went camping at Ras el Hilal, although it was not exactly an ideal site. However, camping in Libya in summer is easy as far as weather is concerned - it just does not rain. In consequence flysheets are more useful than tents. Most of our time was spent sleeping, eating, swimming and finding the shortest and most difficult way up a nearby pass. Food came from three sources - that we bought (from the NAAFI shop), that we begged (from the kitchen) and that we "borrowed" (from the Stewards store). For the benefit of future campers in Libya (should there be any after reading this) raw figs work wonders!!!

Almost a year after arriving in Libya, I was on my way home, by air again, at least with more enthusiasm for the country than I had when I left the U.K. Perhaps it was the thought of demobilisation which lay ahead!

R.G.GARNISH.

SENIOR TROOP NOTES.

With several Seniors in sight of eighteen summers each, some changes in the composition of the troop have recently taken place. "Tacky", Ian, Reg and Sidney have gone up into the Rover Crew. In the other direction "Ginger", "Crasher" and "Mac", i.e. Martin Webb, Alan Hockham and Ian Dow respectively, have come up from the Troop. John Benge, a Queen's Scout from the 8th Worthing Sea Scout Group, has recently joined the Senior Troop.

Bob Dodge, Ted Boddy, Ivor and Reg, spent twelve days cruising in Sandling between Gillingham and Brightlinsea and had an enjoyable time. From what we hear, everyone spent a lot of time writing letters to Reg's girl friend to assure her he was alright. We were all very pleased to meet Frans Westerman and Eddy Van Rhoon (Skipper and Mate of "De Lichtstrall") again when they visited England for a week in August. They spent a weekend in Kingston and saw the Group Headquarters of which they had heard so much last year. As the Bosun was also in Kingston that weekend, we were able to have quite a re-union of the Dutch Cruise. They then went cruising with Bob Dodge and Bob Shackleton in the Bosun's boat "Vandal" down in the Thames Estuary.

Although Ian has now gone into the Rover Crew, it should be recorded for posterity that he attained the distinction of being the first Senior to arrive at Troop meetings in his own car. It was a wonder the car survived some of the attention it was given while parked outside the H.Q. on recent Sunday afternoons. Now it is in the mechanical world of Rover motor cycles it will perhaps receive the respect to which its age entitles it!

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A DAY'S VISIT TO THE JAMBOREE (contd. from page 4)

her camp site. We understood also she had already been well visited by the troop. On the way back, however, we did meet some of the Canadian Scouts who had stayed in Kingston before the Jamboree and who were in Copenhagen Sub Camp, the one worst hit by the heavy rainstorms earlier in the week. They seemed to have coped all right though. We only had brief glimpses of Powells Pool, (where Sea Scout displays were staged) and the working party quarters (in which Keith resided in "great luxury") and Olympia Camp (V.I.Ps abode). Had we known the train would be $\frac{1}{2}$ hour late, we should have lingered. We eventually arrived at Kingston about 10.30 p.m. after a most interesting day.

TROOP CRUISE, 1957.

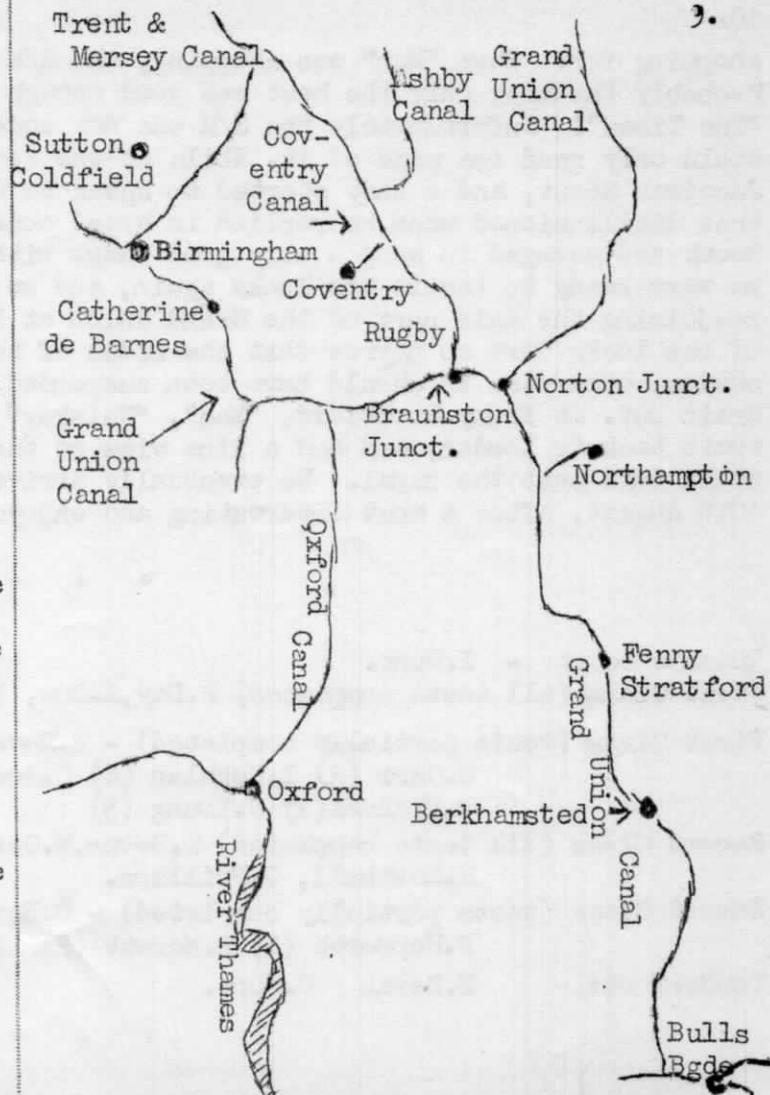
Following "Leander" tradition of doing things differently, the Troop this year went most of the way to the Jubilee Jamboree by water. British Transport Waterways barge "Themis" was chartered for two weeks, and the journey was made by way of the Grand Union and other canals. Contrary to the usual custom, it was not raining when a start was made from Bulls Bridge (near Hayes, Middlesex) on Sunday 24th July. With a party of 30 there was not much room to spare, as although the barge was 72ft. overall, the living space was only 50ft with 7ft beam. The rest of the available space was taken up with engine room and living space for the crew of two (Jim and Arthur). We had hardly got organised before we reached the first of the 276 locks which we passed through during the course of the cruise. We soon got the knack of working them, and our quickest effort was to get through a flight of 24 locks in about $1\frac{3}{4}$ hours (a good deal faster than the normal time, so the crew told us). It was not unusual for someone to fall in a lock - Splunne went into one in his plastic mac, but managed to retain the lock handle he was carrying! In another, Pidgeon was not so careful and dropped his handle so the water level was lowered, and he went fishing for it (and found it). Another time a bicycle accidentally fell in! In fact either in locks or elsewhere most of the troop seemed to fall in during the cruise. The record was held by "Red" and even "Yank" missed his footing on one occasion!

We spent the first night just outside Berkhamsted, near a gasworks and other amenities. It was too cramped for us all to sleep aboard, and usually two wanderlust tents were put up ashore to accommodate the overflow.

The second day out was Gerald's birthday, and we celebrated this in style with a cake, ice cream and jelly. All cooking was done in a very small L-shaped galley but we did have the advantage that the boat was lit by electricity. We left the Grand Union at Braunston Junction and entered the Oxford Canal. Near here we went through a tunnel nearly two miles long, a somewhat eerie experience, with water seeping through the roof of it and bricks looking as if they would fall out at any moment. We also went right through the radio transmitting station at Rugby. At Marston Junction we went into the Coventry Canal and thence into the Birmingham and Fazelby Canal. Here the water was very shallow, and we went aground in mid-stream several times. As we approached Birmingham the water got decidedly dirty,

no doubt due to the refuse which is carried along it by horse-drawn barges. In some places the oil and scum on top was more than 1 in. thick. We saw a party of Sea Rangers (with horse-drawn barge) entering such a stretch looking very "natty" in their uniforms. By the time they came out the other side they looked very much the worse for wear.

We had hoped to camp near the Jamboree site, but found the Canal to it was closed owing to lock repairs. We turned back into another branch of the Grand Union and camped for 5 days at Catherine de Barnes, near Solihull, south of Birmingham. As a result of Jim talking to a local greengrocer, we were loaned a lorry big enough to take the whole troop to the Jamboree each day we were camped there. With Yank driving it was some journey too! At the Jamboree, we had a close-up view of the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh the day they visited it. We saw Akela, "Tacky", and Keith, and had tea with "Rusty" of 1st K.H. While we were camping, some of the Canadians who had stayed in Kingston came to see us. We also saw a party of Maltese Scouts taking a canal trip by horse-drawn barge. About this time "Crasher" seemed to lose his memory (dreaming of a certain person he knows!) and had to have everything written down for him, otherwise we should never have got the provisions he went



otherwise we should never have got the provisions he went

shopping for! When "Mac" was shopping, the S/M asked him to bring back a newspaper. Probably thinking only the best was good enough for the S/M, "Mac" returned with "The Times"! Unfortunately the S/M was not equal to such highbrow literature and could only read one page of it. While at the Jamboree, Gerald was taken for a Jamaican Scout, and a lady started to speak to him in pidgen English. She was somewhat disillusioned when he replied in broad cockney. Splunne met a Japanese Sea Scout and managed to swop a very good badge with him. After 5 days rest (?), we were ready to tackle the locks again, and we set out on the return journey re-joining the main part of the Grand Union at Norton Junction. Incidentally some of the locks were so narrow that the sides of the barge had to be pulled in with chains, otherwise we should have been suspended in mid-air when water started to drain out. At Ferry Stratford, "Mac", "Whiskey" "Pluto" and "Paddy" caught the train back to London, and had a fine view of the rest of us working locks as the train went past the canal. We eventually arrived back at Bulls Bridge on Sunday 10th August, after a most interesting and enjoyable trip.

MARTIN WEEB and IAN DOW.

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Queen's Scout - I.Hunt.

First Class (all tests completed) R.Day, A.Dow, I.Dow, J.Fielder, A.Hockham, M.Webb, S.Webb.

First Class (tests partially completed) - R.Bevan (3), R.Brave(1),
C.Carr (2) I.Coghlan (4) C.Godsavie (4) D.Huckson (4)
R.Michael(2) C.Young (5)

Second Class (all tests completed) R.Bevan, M.Carter, I.Coghlan, D.Huckson,
R.Lenthall, G.Phillips.

Second Class (tests partially completed) - P.Bevan (2), D.Dove (3) C.Hunt (6)
P.Hepworth (4) R.Marett (8) A.Marrion (3) R.Milne (2) R.Warner (1)

Tenderfoot: P.Bevan C.Hunt.

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ROVER RAMBLINGS.

During the last few weeks, the Crew has almost returned to its former numerical strength. Dick Garnish has arrived back from the Army (his experiences in N.Africa appear elsewhere), and Roland Spencer from the Navy (he has agreed to write a description of the South Sea Islands before his memory of them fades! (Look out for it in the next issue of the "Water Rat"). In addition there are 4 new Rover Squires, "Tacky", Ian, Sidney and Reg. "Hoppy", although still on the strength, cannot attend many meetings as he has now gone into residence at the Shoreditch Training College at Englefield Green. Dick Read, Derek Milner and Graham Fennell were invested as Rover Scouts in September.

"Dai", "Hoppy", Derek, Dick and "Flan", spent a week in Sandling in July. Leaving from Whitstable they sailed all night to Brightlinsea. From there they went round to Harwich and up the River Orwell to Ipswich, returning to Brightlinsea at the end of the week. During much of the time they were accompanied by two Rovers from the Ilford Sea Scouts who were also cruising in the area. These Rovers knew "Lwander" H.Q.well, as they had been in the parties of Ilford Sea Scouts who have spent weekends with us during the past few years. The well kept log of the cruise shows it was a great success, and the final note reads "most enjoyable week. Sailing most of the time. Motor used only where absolutely necessary. This week was excellent sailing experience for all the crew". Sandling was booked by another party for the following week, so during that week the same crew (less "Flan", who had to start vacation work in a shipyard) took the Bosun's boat "Vandal" up river to Oxford and back. Again a very enjoyable time was spent by those who took part.

Other Crew activities during the summer have been visits to Hayling Island, and a visit to the Farnborough Air Display. The Crew has also been assisting with the alterations at the rear of the H.Q. It is proposed to provide a concrete stand which will be large enough to accommodate Sandling. This will enable us to carry out work on her hull without having to use other people's facilities, as we have had to do in the past two years. It is also intended to turn the present garage into a workshop.

CUB PACK NEWS.

During the summer we held two week-end camps, the first over Whitsun was at Polyapes for Sixers and Seconds only. The other, for the Pack, was at the end of June when in beautiful weather we went to Liphook and camped on the same site as last year. We are very grateful to all parents who helped by transporting Cubs and camp gear by cars. In the Kingston District Cub Sports held in July we gained 2nd place, being narrowly beaten by 2nd Norbiton Pack. It was a pleasure to meet Miss Frizelle (A.C.C.Cubs) who was one of the distinguished visitors present with the Mayor and Mayoress of Kingston at the Sports. In the County Cub Swimming Gala at Epsom on Oct.5th, Peter Howes gained 3rd place in the one-length breast stroke race, and thereby helped Kingston District to win 4th place. We are now looking forward to our Hallowe'en Party which this year is to have a Rob Roy setting, with Scottish dancing. For those who prefer something modern, the Pack "Skiffle Group" is performing. Anthony Bennett, Bernard Cole and Keith Maund have now gone into the Troop.

AKELA.

OLD SCOUTS BRANCH.

Following the fixing of the upper Rover age limit last year, most of the then Rovers have re-organised themselves into an Old Scouts Branch, which has now become firmly established and has a membership of over 30. It is affiliated to the B.P. Guild of Old Scouts, and holds regular meetings at Group H.Q. on the first Friday of each month. These meetings are mainly of a social character, and afford an opportunity for those who have been connected with Group to get together. From time to time, special efforts are organised to help the Group in some way or other. A successful "Barbecue" was held in August, and a Dance is being arranged to follow the Group Bazaar on 16th November, at St. Peter's Hall, Norbiton.

Anyone who has been connected with the Scout Movement (whether in this Group or elsewhere) and who would like to join the Branch, should get in touch with the Secretary, G. Biden 46 Hardman Road, Kingston (Phone KINGSTON 0386). The small annual subscription covers the monthly Branch News Sheet, and copies of "The Guildsman" (the official magazine of the B.P. Guild of Old Scouts).