
Ajax Sea Scout Group and Explorer Sea Scout Unit

Annual Report
for the year ended 31st March 2009



*Flashback to 1956: Sally Fiber officially names the TS Fitzroy.
Looking on: Annie and Charles Allchild and Ajax Group Scout Leader Chiefy Sharman.
For the fascinating story see inside.*

The Allchild Pennies From Heaven Trust and the Naming of the Fitzroy

At our AGM in 2005 Ajax received an unexpected donation from the Allchild 'Pennies From Heaven Trust' which had recently been wound up. A cheque for £1000 was presented to the Group by Sally Fiber, Chair of the trust which was set up by her parents, the late Annie and Charles Allchild, former legendary hosts of London's most famous bohemian tavern "The Fitzroy".

Here's the fascinating history of the trust and its connection with Ajax. In 1886 Sally Fiber's grandfather 'Pop' Kleinfeld came to live in England. During the First World War he worked in Soho making greatcoats for the army. One day when making a delivery he spotted a run down hostelry on the corner of Windmill Street and Charlotte Street. In 1919 he became the first licensee of the renamed Fitzroy Tavern with special dispensation for his 15 year old daughter to help behind the bar! From humble beginnings the tavern soon attracted famous bohemian artists, writers and composers, whom Pop christened the 'Fitzrovians'. The Fitzroy became the bohemian rendezvous of the world and in recognition, the area has now officially adopted the name 'Fitzrovia'.

In 1923 Pop Kleinfeld invented a way of collecting money for charity by inviting his customers to throw their spare coins at the ceiling in home made darts which they constructed themselves using crepe paper, cork and tin tacks which Pop provided as required. Even the bombs during the Second World War did not dislodge these heavenly darts! With London full of deserving children, Pop decided to use the money to fund outings to the country. Each year more money was collected and eventually 500 children benefited annually in this way – many of whom had never seen the countryside before.

Annie Kleinfeld married Charles Allchild in 1934 and together they continued to run The Fitzroy. Sally, their only child, was born in the tavern in 1936. During the war Charles served in the RAF where he met the famed wartime Gang Show originator Ralph Reader. The two men developed a close friendship and great mutual respect.

After the war Ralph Reader became a regular visitor to the Fitzroy together with other notable

characters including actors Richard Attenborough and his wife Sheila Sim, broadcasting personality Gilbert Harding and Lord Killanin, the first International President of the Olympic Committee.

It was now decided to use the Pennies From Heaven money to fund a gigantic annual party for 500 children instead of outings to the country since many London children had been evacuated to the country in the war. Ralph Reader became Director of Entertainment supported by a group of Scouts including founding members of Ajax. The annual parties became one of London's institutions and in 1953, the year of the Queen's coronation, the Allchilds decided to initiate a special collection to thank Ralph Reader for his unstinting help. With the money it was decided to purchase a training ship for Ajax.

With the generosity of the Fitzroy customers the ship was duly purchased and fully equipped. Gilbert Harding, anxious not to be left out, brought the mooring ropes! In July 1956 the ex RN vessel was brought upstream to Thames Ditton where, at a ceremony organised by Ajax Group Scout Leader 'Chiefy' Sharman, it was officially renamed TS Fitzroy by the young Sally Allchild. The Fitzroy provided a valuable training base for Ajax until it was sadly vandalised and stripped of many fittings. Fortunately, with the insurance money, Ajax was able to purchase a number of smaller replacement craft which formed the basis of its fleet for many years.

Following the establishment of the Allchild Pennies From Heaven Trust in 1956, Ajax received an annual donation from the fund. When the fund was wound up in 2005 the trustees passed the capital to the beneficiaries including Ajax. At that time Ajax stated that it intended to use this generous donation to help fund a new boat to be named the "Fitzroy" in commemoration.

With the aid of this donation plus an Admiralty grant, Ajax has now purchased a suitable replacement for the original TS Fitzroy and this will today officially be named by the same Sally Fiber who, 53 years ago, named the Group's original Fitzroy. Sally will be joined by her husband Arthur and the Group is greatly honoured that both are able to join us today.



***61st Annual General Meeting
of the Group Council of the
4th Thames Ditton 'Ajax' Sea Scouts
(Royal Navy Recognised Group No. 60)
Sunday 20th September 2009 at the
Chiefy Sharman Water Activities Centre***

Agenda

1. To receive the Group Chairman's welcome and opening remarks.
2. To receive the Group Chairman's Report.
3. To receive the Group Scout Leader's Report.
4. To receive the Group Scout Leader's nominations for Group President, Group Chairman and other members of the Group Executive Committee for the coming year.
5. To elect lay officials of the Group for the coming year:
 - a. Group Treasurer
 - b. Group Secretary
 - c. Independent Examiner.
6. To elect Section Representatives to the Group Executive Committee for the coming year.
7. Any other business.

The meeting will be preceded by the naming of the Fitzroy and followed by the unveiling of the ship's wheel from MTB 747 'Ajax II'

GROUP CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This has been my eighth year of involvement with the Group and my first year as Chairman of Ajax and I am pleased to be able to present my first report.

We live in an age in which our children are increasingly mesmerised by screens and digital entertainment and struggle to get off the couch. Scouting is one of the few remaining alternatives which enable our children to have fun, learn new skills, take responsibility for their own actions, be stretched and have adventures, often in the outdoors, in a caring, decent and safe environment. As well as offering all the traditional Scouting activities, Ajax is a Sea Scout Group, (one of only 100 Sea Scout Groups recognised by the Royal Navy), a Royal Yachting Association Centre and a British Canoe Union awarding facility, allowing it to offer a wide range of water-based activities and award internationally recognised sailing, power boating, canoeing, first aid and radio communications qualifications. The Group also supports members in their pursuit of Duke of Edinburgh awards. During the year, Ajax has maintained these wide ranging capabilities and delivered character building and leadership development activities, increasingly sought after by prospective employers, but above all our young people have been active and had fun.

Ajax is a voluntary organisation that relies on a partnership between Leaders, supporters (parents, ex-Ajaccios and friends) and the broader Scouting movement.

The Group is indebted to many individuals. The contributions of some are visible, such as the Leaders who turn out each week to run the training Sections, but much preparatory work by these and many others behind the scenes is largely invisible. On behalf of all the current parents I thank profusely all these dedicated individuals. I would particularly like to thank Mark Marriott who gives far more than we could possibly imagine both in the organisation and delivery of our Scouting activities but also in providing vital input and support to our fund-raising activities, certainly above and beyond what could reasonably be expected. I would also like to thank Alison Derrick, our previous Chairman for her continued support. Thanks also to enthusiastic parents – both of current and former members.

The Group's operating costs are fairly high due to the considerable Scouting and boating opportunities provided. Ajax has to maintain the Water Activities Centre, purchase and maintain a wide range of boating equipment and train and maintain the qualifications of all the specialist instructors. Membership subscriptions are insufficient to cover the Group's operating costs and are supplemented by donations, grants and fundraising. The Group Executive Committee, of which I have been

Chairman, is responsible for the financial position of the Group and in particular the fundraising and other parental support required.

The financial position at the beginning of the year was felt to be satisfactory, though following a number of years of investment, the GEC felt the Group's reserves should not be allowed to diminish further. The challenge therefore was to redress the balance between income and costs and ideally achieve a modest increase in reserves.

We currently have three main fundraising events each year, the Esher May Fair, the Ajax Plant Sale and the Claygate Flower Show. Historically we have had sufficient parental support on the day for these events, but insufficient parental support for the considerable effort required in advance to organise them. The burden was falling on too few, and could not continue. I invited all parents to consultation meetings to explore whether they were prepared to provide the necessary organisational support or preferred an alternative funding model. A wide range of views was expressed and I am pleased to report that a number of parents came forward and we decided to proceed with the existing funding model but with a broader base of parental support.

The most important fund-raising event is the Esher May Fair, for which we have built up an excellent reputation with the public, with stallholders and with the council as well as a good base of local business sponsorship. An almost completely new organising committee of parents took this on and did a fantastic job. The weather was fair if not perfect and we achieved our best ever financial outcome – way ahead of any prior result. Special thanks must go to the organising committee Kevin Simpson, Alan Coe, Ben Darlow, John Moore and Paul Williams (not to be confused with Paul Williams Cub Scout Leader!), with support from Mark Marriott and Alison Derrick.



A big thanks also to all our sponsors including Thames Water organised by Ben Darlow, matched

funding from Microsoft organised by Alan Coe and all the other sponsors organised by Paul Williams. I am keeping my fingers firmly crossed that the same committee will be back in action this year together with some additional new blood!

The Plant Sale, held two weeks before the May Fair, benefited from the continued expertise and organisation of our previous Chairman Alison Derrick. We again held the Plant Sale on our 'Quarterdeck' (the outside area where we store our boats) and this created a more intimate atmosphere and allowed the public to see a little more of what we do! Parental support was excellent and as a result of more effective leafleting we achieved another best ever financial result for this event.

Our third major fund raising event is the Claygate Flower Show at which we operate a Beer Tent, Tea Pavilion and new this year, a BBQ. Although this is not quite such an onerous event to organise, we do need more helpers on the day and more parents to bake cakes in advance – we would not have got through the challenge this year had we not been able to call on a large number of non-parent helpers and leaders – and if a small hard core had not been prepared to suffer a gruelling 12 hour day. Next year this will have to become a mandatory parent support event in addition to the Esher May Fair. We achieved a record turnover, but this was eroded by increased overheads, resulting in a 'good' rather than

an 'exceptional' result. I feel we can significantly improve our performance for this event next year by some renegotiation and fine tuning.

For the year as a whole, we achieved an excellent financial result in a challenging economic environment and equally importantly we made some progress in spreading the load more fairly between parents.

We should not forget that Ajax cannot function without parental support in other areas including the running of musters and the maintenance of our building and our boats. Here too the Group needs your support.

It is not possible to mention by name everyone who has put themselves out to support the Group, but your support is needed, noticed and very much appreciated – thank you.

If you value what Ajax offers your children, please support the team of Leaders and parents who work so hard to run the Group. It is very much my hope that in 2010 our fundraising activities will increasingly happen as they should – with a little help from everyone.

Toby Stephens
GROUP CHAIRMAN

GROUP SCOUT LEADER'S REPORT

Leading a Sea Scout Group is not unlike the task of leading a family or a business – but with one big difference. All those involved are there because they want to be. There is no compulsion and no remuneration. For both the youngsters and the adults the only reasons to participate are fun, friendship and the opportunity for learning and adventure.

One good measure of success is therefore the numbers in the Group. I am pleased to report that our Beaver and Cub Sections remain at capacity, our Sea Scout Troop is healthy and expanding and our Explorer Sea Scout Unit has a strong and vibrant core.

The Group's only reason for being is of course the youngsters, but without adults there is nothing we can do. I am delighted therefore that during the year in all our training Sections our leadership team has again continued to strengthen. At a time when Scouting's biggest problem remains a shortage of adult Leaders, we should consider ourselves very fortunate to have the benefit of a large and growing team of quality adults who are prepared to commit so much of their time.

Indeed it has been particularly pleasing this year to see Leaders from every Section supporting our Troop boating sessions on Saturday afternoons, for without this it would be have been very difficult to operate these crucial Saturday musters. So a big thanks to everyone for this tremendous team effort which demonstrated most forcibly that within the Group we no longer simply have 'Section' teams but rather, one truly cohesive team that is prepared to rally round irrespective of the need.

But the operation of a Sea Scout Group requires not only adults to lead the training Sections, but also adults to maintain the physical assets, to look after the administration and to raise the vital funds without which the Group could not exist. In this area too we have been blessed this year with an even stronger team of movers and shakers.

A big, big thank you to every adult who in one way or another has given their support.

In this, the centenary of Sea Scouting, it is great to report on another fantastic year with no real clouds on the horizon. Just like any family or business there are of course daily issues that arise, but with a little creativity and flexibility these can normally be resolved and that is the job of a Group Scout Leader!

Now let's hear about the activities of our sections:

BEAVER SCOUT COLONY

(for boys and girls aged 6 to 8)

Beaver Scout Leader Polly Zabari writes:

Our Beaver Colony is full with almost 100% attendance from the boys and girls each week. We have three uniformed Leaders (although Nick Barber is leaving us at Christmas to become an Explorer Leader – we will miss you Nick) and three (as yet) non-uniformed members of the team.

In autumn 2008 we made and launched rockets, visited the RNLI station at Teddington, sledged at Sandown and made bird feeders from the sunflower heads we grew earlier in the year. We celebrated fireworks night by making blow paint pictures and launching a Chinese lantern. We learnt (and tied ourselves in) knots, had a visit from the St Johns Ambulance which enabled us to achieve our Emergency Aid Level 1 badge and ended the year with a Christmas party.

During the spring of this year, most Beavers gained the Friendship, Fitness, Creative and Outdoor Challenge badges as well as the Explore and Creative badges. We were visited by our local Community Support Officer and had an outing to a local synagogue. We also continued our programme of crafts, making Valentines, Easter and Mother's Day cards as well as hosting our Mother's Day Tea Party – this time to demonstrate our ability to make and deliver a hot drink.

In the summer we took advantage of the better (!!) weather and the great outdoors with a wide game on Oxshott Heath. We also modeled junk and completed our healthy eating challenge. We made and launched various types of rockets, visited Esher Fire Station and completed the adventure course at Walton Firs Camp Site. I think the highlight for the Beavers was the water games evening at the Windmill Lane Rec. where EVERYONE got wet – but for me personally it was the presentation of nine Chief Scout Bronze Awards at our most recent Royal Navy inspection.



My personal thanks to uniformed Leaders Nick Barber and David Goodman and a big welcome to Marcus Butlin who has recently joined the team. My thanks also to helpers Janet Cole and Louise Hambley and to my son Tom for all his valued support.

CUB SCOUT PACK

(for boys and girls aged 8 to 11)

Cub Scout Leader Paul Williams writes:

It has been a great year for our Cubs and also for our leadership team. We have enjoyed a fun filled programme of activities and we have taken part in many Esher District events. Blessed with an exceptionally strong leadership team we have been able to focus on games and activities properly based around the Sixes which has gone down very well. Currently the Pack has 25 members overall.

GSL's Note: *And very energetic they all appear to be!*



In May we took part in the District Day Hike which helped consolidate the map reading skills of Cubs (and Leaders). It was a beautiful, sunny day on Leith Hill and was enjoyed by all. We even managed to collect some firewood for our sausage cooking later in the year.

June saw the District Cub Camp at Walton Firs where we were joined by over 300 Cubs from other Packs in the area. There were many great activities that had been organised by Packs from around the District. Our own water cannons and tent peg painting proved as popular as ever. The Saturday evening was rounded off with a campfire and tremendous firework display.

Before the summer break we ended with some Saturday boating musters to give the Cubs a chance to try kayaking and pulling. The weather was good and the opportunity to get on the river was much enjoyed by those who took part. It was

a great taster and an opportunity for the Cubs to experience a little of what will be available to them when they progress to the Troop.

During our September musters we took advantage of the fine weather and light nights to learn about fire lighting and cooking outdoors. It is amazing how good the taste of burned sausages can be when you have cooked them yourself! We also had great fun attempting the Athletics badge. We have some very competitive Cubs!

The month of October saw the annual District Sausage Sizzle hosted at The Dittons HQ. Our Cubs had much fun playing games, collecting firewood, lighting fires, cooking sausages and eating them!

For our final muster in December we took the Cubs once again to the Sandown Park ski slope for a sledging and ringo party. Even though the conditions were rather chilly (certainly for the adults), the youngsters soon warmed up and had a wonderful time.

In January, six Cubs took part in the District Badge Afternoon where three gained the Communicator Badge and three the Artist badge.

Another annual District event is the Cross Country Run held at West End Common in February. We had fewer entrants than usual this year, but all who took part had a good time. We obviously need to start training earlier for next year's event!

In March we held our popular swimming muster at the Hampton open air pool. The Cubs had a great time, but the rain came down and the poor adults on the poolside were as wet as the Cubs in the pool! The Cubs have been working on their Swimming badges and a number are progressing really well and have reached Stage 4. The good news is that this will leave them more time to focus on other badges in the Troop – and it takes care of the Ajax 'swimming test'.

It is a rule at Ajax that nobody is allowed to take part in any water activities unless they can swim 50 metres in light clothing and stay afloat afterwards for five long minutes!! Something to work on if that sounds like a bit of a challenge!! It was a good session with many Cubs achieving more than expected.

A big thank you to all the parents who helped make it such an enjoyable year for all our Cubs. Particular thanks go to my leadership team of Diane Davison, John Onken, Graeme Jones and Oliver Capon who provided such great help,

support and good humour. Unfortunately we have now lost John to the USA and Ollie to University, so we are on the lookout for some additional help!

SEA SCOUT TROOP

(For boys and girls 11 to 15)

Assistant Scout Leader Chris West writes:

This has been a year of transition for the Troop. With lots of help from Paul Norman, our new leaders Joss Gamble, Esther Heaslip and I have all been finding our feet and getting to know how things are *really* done. In the last couple of months we have also greatly benefited from the help and support of the newest member of the Ajax team, Roy Court, whose many years of Sea Scout leadership experience have proved invaluable. During the year several of the Troop moved up to the Explorer Unit but even more new members came up from the Cubs with the result that overall Troop membership currently stands at 30.

After an autumn with the focus firmly on the water we decided to round off the year with a party to remember. Because Joss, Esther and I all work in the theatre industry we were able to access masses of professional lighting equipment with the result that the WAC was literally lit up like a Christmas tree. We organised a DJ to provide the music and invited our friends from Warspite to join us for what turned out to be fun and exciting evening for all involved. Expect bigger and better things this Christmas!

In the new year we entered the District Chess Competition. Congratulations to Arjenn Hunjunt who came 2nd. Just goes to show the breadth of talents in the Troop.

Our regular visits to Walton Fire Station continued this year culminating with the whole Troop being invited to attend a practical session involving one fire engine and a lot of water! Congratulations to all who gained their Fire Safety badge.

During the spring we focused on preparations for our Royal Navy inspection which was due to take place in early May. Huge amounts of effort were applied to ensure the Scouts were fully prepared and looking impeccable – and that the WAC was polished and gleaming. Every member of the Troop had reason to be proud, with impeccable behaviour and a creditable display of boating skills – especially considering the large number of recent joiners in the Troop. Congratulations to every Sea Scout on their personal contribution to a very successful inspection.

Once again during the year we organised three well attended coastal sailing weekends at the Cobnor Activities centre on Chichester Harbour.

Congratulations to Riley Clements, Tom Dixon, Joe Farmer, Andrew Moore, Luke Quasar-Tighe, Elliott Salmon, Ollie Sancroft, James Simpson and Lydia Thomas for achieving their RYA Youth Sailing Scheme Stage 2 qualification. Next step Stage 3!

After a rather lacklustre performance in last year's National Sea Scout Regatta (more practice clearly needed!), I am pleased to advise that in this year's competition the Troop did a little better with second places in the finals being achieved both by Andrew Moore in the under 14 Sculling over the Stern event and by our under 12½ gig crew. Well done but overall clearly still more work to do!

Summer camp is always the highlight of our Scouting year and this year was no exception. This year's site was in a beautiful location on the picturesque Isle of Wight. Whilst we didn't get in as much boating as in previous years due to some adverse timings of the tides, the boating that did take place was much enjoyed by all. As ever, one of the highlights for our Patrols was their Coxswain's Cruise when they each have to plan and execute an overnight expedition using our Home Counties Gig. This year, because of landing restrictions in Newton Creek where we were based, we organised the overnight camp site in advance – normally it's no more than a farmer's field! The site we organised was at an army facility and although remote, it was equipped with running water and with loos – luxuries that no Scout is ever likely to encounter in the future!



Thanks to Roy Court, this year we managed not just one but two camp fires complete with hearty singing and silly dances!

In addition, we also managed to fit in all our usual camp activities including a night hike, a day hike,

patrol afternoons out – this year in Cowes – and even some pioneering activities, again courtesy of Roy.

Well done to Patrol leader Max Kingdon and his Patrol for winning the camp competition – despite missing the turning to the Coxswain's Cruise camp site and nearly ending up in middle of the Solent – good job the Leader team keeps a look out at all times!!!!

A thousand thanks to all those Leaders, Instructors, Section Assistants, parents and their partners who in one way or another contributed to the success of this year's summer camp. Without each and every one of you this massive annual undertaking would have simply been impossible.

Building on our experience of the past year and with the benefit of continuing help and support from Paul Norman and Roy Court, we are looking forward to a very exciting next 12 months.

GSL's Note: *A big thanks to our uniformed Leaders: Paul Norman, Matthew Barber, Joss Gamble, Esther Heaslip, Chris West and Roy Court – plus all those Instructors and Explorers who have given of their time.*

EXPLORER SEA SCOUT UNIT

(For young men and women aged 15 to 18)

Explorer Sea Scout Leader Dinah Mallett writes:

Following an autumn of non-stop boating, our winter programme saw us mainly back on terra firma. Activities included night hiking in preparation for the County Night Challenge at which six of our Explorers walked all night and undertook some difficult challenges in the Surrey hills in competition with fifty teams from all over the county. Night kayaking also proved popular with our kayaks being launched Sunbury and then paddled in the dark back to the WAC.



In January we took part in the District Winter Walking Weekend in the Brecon Beacons. With snow and ice to walk across it was a real winter weekend. We also took part in other District events including the Ready Steady Cook competition, raft racing, rifle shooting, backwoods cooking and the annual games evening – all of which we much enjoyed.

In March, following a weekend course run by Ajax at the Royal Navy Sailing Centre in Portsmouth, four of our Explorers gained RYA Powerboat qualifications. Congratulations to them all.

After Easter, we started serious training for the National Sea Scout Regatta. Congratulations to the following for their fine performances: Robbie Mallett – 1st place in the under 16 slalom kayak; Ben Rutherford – 2nd place in the under 18 slalom kayak; Mark Bartholomew – 1st place in the under 16 single dinghy; Alex Thomas – 2nd place in the under 18 single dinghy (despite equipment problems!!). Whilst our under 18 team put up a fine showing against tough competition, our under 16 team triumphed, winning the overall under 16 trophy. We now have some silverware to display in our trophy cabinet – and the pressure is really on for 2010!

Finally, as you will have read in the Troop report, this year's summer camp was at Newtown Creek on the Isle of Wight. Our Explorers had a truly magnificent camp starting from day one when, supported by the Group's safety boat The Stokes, they sailed our two Wayfarers from Lymington to the Isle of Wight.

Rather than our usual open field, this year's site comprised a series of glades with interconnecting pathways. The Unit camped in its own private little glade which enabled them to 'do their own thing' with little interruption from the outside world.

In addition, this year we tried even harder to ensure that the Unit had its own independent programme and because we had ample adult Skills Instructors in camp we did not need unduly to call on their services to support the Troop activities.

This all contributed to a camp that was generally rated one of the best ever – and to put some icing on the cake Roy Court (is there no end to this man's talents?) managed to arrange for the entire Unit to spend a couple of days aboard two sizeable yachts gaining valuable big boat experience.

And as if this were not enough, camp ended as it started with an exciting sail across the Solent. All in all, a great finale to the Unit's year.

ROYAL NAVY RECOGNITION

Ajax is one of just 100 Sea Scout Groups in the UK to be officially recognised by the Royal Navy. This prestigious recognition brings many tangible benefits, not least access to significant grant aid funds. In order to retain our recognition we are formally inspected every 18 months.

Our most recent inspection took place in May and as you will have read in the Troop report we passed with flying colours. In his report Lt Cdr David Griffiths, the RN Inspecting Officer, wrote that Ajax Sea Scouts: ". . .provides an excellent Scouting programme to its young people. They have maintained their standards and position within the scheme and, being fine ambassadors for both Scouting and the Royal Navy, I have no hesitation in renewing their RN Recognition."

Hearty congratulations to every member of our Sea Scout Troop and our Explorer Sea Scout Unit for their part in helping us retain this important Royal Navy recognition.

RYA TRAINING CENTRE

RYA Centre Principal Adrian Sancroft writes:

Ajax operates a Royal Yachting Association Training Centre jointly with our friends and neighbours Warspite Sea Scouts. The RYA Centre operates from the Ajax Water Activities Centre with a coastal base at Cobnor in Chichester Harbour, where Ajax keeps two Wayfarer sailing dinghies. In order to maintain our accreditation, we are inspected annually by the RYA both at Thames Ditton and at Cobnor, with our facilities, fleet, instructors and operating procedures being carefully examined. I am delighted to report that once again this year we passed these inspections with flying colours.

As usual during the year we ran three coastal experience weekends at the Cobnor Activities Centre in Chichester Harbour for members of our Sea Scout Troop and Explorer Sea Scout Unit. In addition to our own members we were also joined by members of Warspite and 1st Molesey 'Jaguar' to whom we had extended invitations. We have also most latterly been joined by a group of Cheltenham-based Sea Cadets where Peter Wadsworth now instructs. We are delighted that the Ajax Instructor team has been able to deliver high-quality coastal training weekends to such a diverse group of young people.

As well as providing pure coastal sailing experience, during the year we have run various

RYA courses including Youth Sailing Scheme Stages 2 and 3 and National Sailing Scheme Level 2. We have also run advanced courses such as Day Sailing and Seamanship Skills, primarily aimed at our Explorers. It is a particular pleasure to report on these latter courses which demonstrate the clear progression of our older members to more advanced levels of sailing and seamanship.

RYA qualifications are technical pre-requisites for Scouts and adults who which to apply for Scout Association Adventurous Activities Permits which are needed to undertake dinghy sailing and power boating in a Scouting context. I am delighted to report that during the year a number of additional Permits have been obtained.

During the past year or so, we have applied even more focus on the training of our adult Leaders and Instructors. I am delighted to advise that Peter Wadsworth has qualified as a Dinghy Instructor, Lucie Jervis has qualified as an Advanced Dinghy Instructor and Tom Pittman has completed the inland element of the Safety Boat course. Congratulations to them all.

Additionally, during the quieter winter months we ran at Cobnor a National Sailing Scheme Level 2 course and separately at the WAC we ran a Level 2 Powerboat course as illustrated below.



Both courses were targeted at adults in the Group. Following each of these courses six adults obtained the relevant qualification. These included those who are currently active in our Beaver and Cub Sections where boating does not form part of the normal training programme. This then represents a broader strengthening of our adult boating skills within the Group – and something on which we will continue to focus in the coming year.

Last but far from least, thanks to Mark Faulkner we were again able to run two RYA First Aid courses

during the year – both of which were fully subscribed and enthusiastically attended by Explorer Scouts and adults from all corners of the county and beyond!

Our RYA Centre is only able to operate and continue to deliver high quality training thanks to a dedicated team of instructors and support staff. My personal thanks to all of them.

OUR FLEET

During the year, we acquired an additional Laser Pico sailing dinghy, bringing our fleet of Picos to a full complement of four. These versatile dinghies provide the perfect platform for the RYA Youth Sailing Scheme that now forms the foundation of our Troop sail training programme.

We are delighted that again this year, with the help of numerous parents during the course of several boat maintenance days, we have managed to maintain our fleet in a very presentable condition. Thanks to all who laboured hard with sandpaper and with varnish brushes.

In last year's report we wrote that one of our next priorities will be "the purchase of a 'displacement' motor boat (one with an inboard engine) for RYA powerboat training". We are am delighted that with the aid of generous donations from the Allchild Pennies from Heaven Trust and an Admiralty grant we have now completed this purchase in the form of a 16 foot Cheverton Champ which will bear the name FITZROY.

Our next agreed priority is the purchase of a 'performance' sailing dinghy to provide a higher level of challenge for our Explorer Sea Scout Unit.

MARTIN DAVIES

It is with sadness that we must report the passing of Martin Davies, parent of old Ajaccio Sian Davies and, albeit briefly, a valued Instructor in the Group. Martin was the consummate Scouter with traditional Scouting skills fine honed whilst working for many years in Africa. We greatly enjoyed his company at our Centenary Summer Camp at Poole and at the subsequent Cobnor sail training weekend. Following an 11 year battle with cancer Martin finally succumbed last month. Our thoughts go out to his widow Ok-Kyeong (Kay) and his children Sian and Tom.



FINALLY – OUR THANKS

Our sincerest thanks to our tremendous team of Leaders, Instructors and Section Assistants without whom, Ajax could not operate. Thanks to our partners for letting us give so much time for the benefit of the youngsters. Thanks to all those parents and others who, in so many ways, have supported the Group.

As ever a very big thanks to our Group Executive Committee and in particular to our new Chairman Toby Stephens who has worked so hard over the past 12 months to take us to an even higher level.

George Barber
GROUP SCOUT LEADER

Mark Marriott
ASSISTANT GROUP SCOUT LEADER

Ajax Sea Scout Group and Explorer Sea Scout Unit

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

Group Scout Leader	George Barber	Tel: 020 8873 6303
Assistant Group Scout Leader	Mark Marriott	Tel: 01932 867402
Assistant Group Scout Leader (Training)	Adrian Sancroft	Tel: 07710 272948
Beaver Scout Leader	Polly Zabari	Tel: 01372 843678
Cub Scout Leader	Paul Williams	Tel: 020 8398 2419
Sea Scout Leader	Chris West	Tel: 07967 806818
Explorer Sea Scout Leader	Dinah Mallett	Tel: 07980 417361
Group Chairman	Toby Stephens	Tel: 020 8339 0402
Group Vice Chairman	Mervyn Jackson	Tel: 020 8398 3130
Group Secretary	Perry Stock	Tel: 01372 457227
Group Treasurer	John Moore	Tel: 020 8398 1467

For more information about this report or membership of Ajax contact:

Assistant Group Scout Leader Mark Marriott
Telephone: 01932 867402

Ajax Sea Scout Group and Explorer Sea Scout Unit
The Chiefy Sharman Water Activities Centre
19a Ditton Reach
Thames Ditton
Surrey KT7 0XB

(No facility to receive mail at this address)

Telephone: 020 8398 4777

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