



## **Navy Command**

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See Distribution

### **RN INSPECTION OF 1<sup>st</sup> LUTON SEA SCOUTS – 16 MAR 11**

1. This land based inspection was held at the Group's HQ in Luton. In attendance were the CC, Mr J Duley, and the ADC Scouts Mr N Jarman plus members of the District Team.
2. The inspection commenced when the Inspecting Officer was piped onboard. Throughout the inspection the piping was confident and to a good standard for which the pipers are highly commended. This was followed by Colours which was well conducted with full and formal ceremony and one which the Troop are fully familiar with.
3. The whole Group, assembled in the hall, made an impressive sight and this was accompanied by a friendly, positive, family atmosphere generated from all having sense of pride in the Group and themselves. On inspection all were very smartly turned out having made obvious efforts with their appearance for which they are all commended. A striking feature of the Group is how well disciplined they all were especially the Cubs and Beavers who were quiet and patient throughout this period. When spoken to all described a full, rewarding and importantly fun programme of activities which is shown not only by the good numbers in each section and their badges but also by the significant number of young people who progress through all of the Sections.
4. On completion of the inspection they fell out for their activities. The Cubs and Beavers combined to play a game involving getting ping pong balls into egg boxes which clearly enthused all of them judging from the noise it created. The Scouts demonstrated a wide range of activities including First Aid, mini pioneering, VHF mayday procedures, cake decorating and then outside kayak instruction, blindfold rigging of the Feva Dinghies and start up checks on the powerboat. The Explorers meanwhile were continuing their practical work to improve the buoyancy in the aluminium tenders they have been given, renew the buoyancy barrels on their rafts and make coracles. These ably demonstrated the strengths of this Group and all were conducted in a fun, practical and safe manner under the supervision of suitably qualified and experienced leaders.
5. The Group have their own large and active Explorer Unit and it was good to see the enthusiasm in the Unit. They are following the Scout and DofE training schemes and 3 Explorers were presented with their Queens Scout and Gold DofE awards at the end of the evening. Under new leadership the Unit are becoming their own DofE centre, under the umbrella of the Luton organisation. Once the new leadership have achieved their assessor training achievement of the scheme awards will be easier.
6. The Troop is very active outdoors, especially afloat, and this strength is reflected in the Challenge badges. It would be good to see all of the Scout training scheme followed and Scouts facilitated in gaining their Chief Scouts Gold Award. This could be done on a rolling 3

year basis during the autumn/winter months incorporating 2 challenge badges per year into the programme without losing anything from the outdoor/water programme.

7. They alternate wet and dry summer camps with summer camp 2009 being held at Calshot and 2010 at Beaudesert Camp site on Cannock Chase. These are clearly most successful and enjoyable events. They also hold camps at Phasels Woods Camp site, including whole Group camps, and at their boating station at Luton Hoo.

8. On the water the Scouts pull, sail and kayak with a significant number holding all of the appropriate Scout Activity badges. This breadth of ability is continued into the Explorers who further their skills and return to assist with getting the Scouts afloat. The Explorers assist at the Docklands Scout Project (DSP) and several have gained the Explorer Advanced Nautical Skills Award which is a significant achievement. The weed at Luton Hoo continues to be a problem and they are hoping that it will not return this year. Good use of the DSP facilities which usefully supplements their activities at Luton Hoo.

9. They are good supporters of the District and County participating in and assisting with organising events and activities. In particular they organise water activity weekends for the region where 128 young people per weekend have the opportunity to experience sailing, kayaking, powerboating and rafting. As stated the Group are active supporters of the DSP being fully involved in the instructional and support teams.

10. Most active afloat and able to achieve both RYA and BCU awards they do not need to avail themselves of the benefits of attendance at RN Recognised Sea Scout events. However they are fully engaged with the scheme and 12 Explorers plus Leaders were fortunate to experience a week onboard HMS ST ALBANS, with whom they have a very good liaison, which included an eye opening Thursday war. They were well hosted by all onboard and became fully involved in all aspects of life on a warship. It was certainly an eye-opening and most enjoyable experience for which they thank the Commanding Officer and Ships Company very much.

11. They have recently enhanced their already comprehensive boat fleet with the purchase, with assistance from the Admiralty fund, of new kayaks and associated equipment. A programme to renew the fleet of boats is just about complete and their fleet is modern, well maintained and fully registered. This is a large and well balanced fleet of water assets, catering for all ages from Beavers to Explorers, which to the Groups credit are all needed and well used.

12. The HQ was very well presented for inspection. It was good to see the refurbished kitchen and toilet facilities and this is now an excellent building. The promised boat house at Luton Hoo continues to be just a promise with little positive on the horizon. Unable to put off any longer they have recently completed a new changing facility and thus can properly cater for both male and female needs. Otherwise relations are generally satisfactory with the owners of Luton Hoo however at times there is a conflict with the perceived needs of the hotel and the Scouts, notably with the Hotel imposing at short notice restrictions on use despite having the long term activity programme for the Scouts.

13. The enthusiastic leadership team is notable for its strength in numbers, skills and how well younger leaders are encouraged and incorporated into the team. There has been a smooth change of GSL and a trend towards an overall younger leadership with the old guard continuing to assist in the background where necessary. One big family, this mix of youth and experience bodes well for the future continued development of the Group.

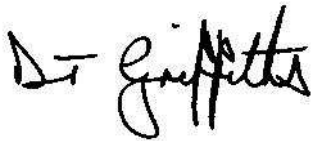
14. The Group Executive continues to function very well and most effectively supports the leaders. Parental and other support is good and the Group are in the process of setting up an Active Support Unit to formally capture and manage this support. Financially sound they raise funds as previously reported.

15. The evening ended with the presentation, by the County Commissioner, of 3 well deserved Queens Scout Awards and the Groups Admiralty to the Scout judged by the Inspecting Officer to be the smartest at inspection. Very many congratulations to all who received awards this evening. Sunset was again conducted with the customary full and formal ceremony following which the Group fell out and assembled informally for the Inspecting

Officer's address. During this he announced that they had most successfully passed this inspection and presented their Certificate of Recognition to Mrs J Merrick, the GSL.

16. The 1<sup>st</sup> Luton Sea Scouts are a first class Sea Scout Group which delivers a good programme to all of it's young people and is notable for the quantity and breadth of the water activities and qualifications that can be gained. Having celebrated their Centenary they continue to grow and develop in a most positive direction to enhance what they can offer. Notably smart and very well disciplined they are fine ambassadors for the RN in this locality and once again most comprehensively demonstrated that they fully earn and deserve RN Recognition – Well Done.

17. Lt Cdr Griffiths thoroughly enjoyed this inspection and thanks his hosts for their warm and friendly welcome and kind hospitality. He wishes them all the very best for the future and hopes that their relations with Luton Hoo management remain sound and with an economic upturn the promised Boathouse materialises.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D T Griffiths'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

D T Griffiths  
Lieutenant Commander Royal Navy

Distribution:

Mr P Jeffrey, Scout Leader, 1<sup>st</sup> Luton Sea Scouts.  
Miss J Winn, Programme and Development Advisor, Gilwell Park  
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