



The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

March 2014

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Pack Pack Pack!

The new year brought in a number of changes for the Pack. Firstly, having sadly lost Simon, our longstanding Cub Scout Leader, it was with trepidation that I attempted to fill his place. In addition to his enthusiasm and sense of fun, it was only once he had gone that I realised how much administration and organisation he was also doing.

We also welcomed a number of new members into the Pack, who have settled in nicely. They have also unfortunately suffered a number of injuries and illnesses (unrelated to Cubs I hasten to add) but, never daunted, Harriet has done her best to join in from her wheelchair. We wish her and Leo a full and speedy recovery.



We have got stuck in to all things cycling this term to gain our Cyclist badge. This started with a trip to Halfords who generously ran a session on cycle maintenance. We covered some theory of safe cycling before finishing off the term with a cycling session at the Hawker Centre. The Cubs ex-

celled at the various cycling challenges we set them before darkness fell and we spent the last twenty minutes cycling around a muddy field in the dark! Now the clocks have changed we look forward to being able to get outside in the light for more activities next term.

We have also been getting creative this term making a 'Thank you' poster for Simon, building tripods which (nearly) supported the weight of up to three cubs, and producing some finely engineered kites. We hope you get a chance to fly them over the holiday if you haven't already.

So, as I stop to draw breath after my first term at the helm, it's been hard work but always fun.

I am immensely proud of our team for the District Scooter Rally, who put in an hour's hard scootering to achieve first place and the trophy.

However, I am also sad to be losing three of our senior Cubs. Tom, Joey and James have developed enormously over the years I have known them and set a great example to the rest of the Pack. We wish them much fun and adventure in Scouts.

We also look forward to getting outside and active with the Pack this summer, including our camp in May, and hope you have a relaxing holiday before then.

Tim



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Beavers 'do their best'

As part of their Faith badge, Beavers had a visit to St Paul's Church, Kingston Hill, where they found out what happens there and what is different about a church building.

Back at the Headquarters, they had a visit from Waitrose staff, who talked about Fairtrade products. Especially popular were the samples of Fairtrade snack bars and bananas!

For the Promise Challenge, a Beaver must complete four activities, showing that they have thought about their Promise. One of these is to explain how they have recently 'done their best' on at least two occasions and how this made a difference. 'Doing their best' included many varied things, such as learning to ride a bike, helping friends, doing their best at school, learning their times tables, helping a forgetful dad find his wallet or keys.

Eddy Fox rescued a plastic container; this is what he said: "I was walking down the Thames path with my mum when we noticed the plastic container with what looked like petrol in it.



I managed to fish it out with a long stick so that we could get rid of it. There is lots of debris coming down the river due to the recent floods. I care about the environment around me and want to make a difference."

Explorers

Explorers have been out on the river the last few weeks, doing night rows in Coypus up to Kingston Bridge. They are getting ready for their pulling permit assessments.

Colder and wetter evenings, with the river flooding were spent painting and decorating in the new Explorer Den and brushing up on Seamanship – parts of a boat, rigging, knotting, the phonetic alphabet. (golf, oscar, oscar, delta!)

Several have gained the Performing Arts badge, through taking part in school plays and dance productions. Also, a selection of Physical Activity, Science and Technology, and Emergency Aid badges.

Rifle Shooting



Shooting at the HQ is now up and running and has proven to be very popular. It has been attended by over half the Troop so far on five separate sessions and the plan is to run more sessions on a regular basis when the HQ and personnel availability permit. Saturday afternoons are not always free for the Scouts due to participation in other activities but hopefully, as the seasons change, more of the Troop will be free to attend, so that everyone gets a chance to take part.

Night Exercise



This year's County Night Exercise took place at a new venue, Westcott and Ranmore Common, near Dorking, utilising a Surrey East Guiding site, Faurefold, at which most of those taking part camped overnight. 27 teams of Scouts from across the County had to navigate, at night, across a variety of terrain, varying from open fields to forest tracks. Each team had to follow a set of map references and check in at control points on the route.

Considering the recent atrocious weather, we were very fortunate to have a dry night, although some of the tracks are now deeply rutted and somewhat challenging.



Leander's team stormed round the course in 3 hours 29 minutes, 30 minutes faster than the next team, gaining full marks in the quiz at each checkpoint. Very well done to all the team, Jessica Knott, Gemi Sparks, Ed Paterson, Joe Cox and Kayra Aldemir.

A great result for the Group.

Coxswain

Russ

Scouts do it themselves



Since the Christmas break the Scout Troop have been engaged in a varying programme, learning several basic Scouting as well as nautical skills.

We started the year with a pioneering night, the object of which was to span a 'Minefield' and get all your team across without touching it. Some interesting designs and builds were put into action using the ropes and poles provided, which turned out to be generally successful, although if it was for real I would have been hiding in a hole some distance away and holding my ears!

We followed up the next week with a First Aid and resuscitation evening, covering all the basic aspects of First Aid and we are very grateful for Elliot's mother Sara, who agreed to help us by teaching the resuscitation class.

'All tied up' activity night followed which aimed to get all the Scouts to the standard of being able to understand and tie ten different knots, the main one being a round turn and two half hitches, so that we don't have any boats unexpectedly floating off towards Teddington!

The PLs then ran a night of activity, which gives them and the Troop a good chance to try something different, as well as teaching the PLs what it's like trying to herd cats whilst going deaf at the same time.

Before half term we ran a Crazy Science night, where we ran and demonstrated several experiments and scientific concepts which, of course, involved some fire and mess to make it more interesting.

After half term we've run a nautical skills night and Robin B came down and ran an Electoral issues themed night to give them a light-hearted insight into how to promote and debate various issues.



The following night we successfully ran and completed the Fire Safety course which gained all those who attended their Fire Safety badge. The simulated fire extinguisher activity got a bit out of hand and more than one person (me included) went home a bit wetter than when we'd arrived!

Alternate swimming and DIY nights were planned to take us up to the Easter break. The DIY activities included changing a 13-amp plug fuse, replacing a tap washer, measuring and cutting wood and – the favourite – drilling into a concrete block and using a Rawlplug to put in a screw. All of which could save



the Scouts a fortune in call-out fees in the future! Any Scout taking part in a DIY project at home will then be eligible for the DIY badge, so parents let us know if they've helped you out.



An evening out on the river is planned to finish off the term, now that the river has slowed down to a manageable level and the clocks will have gone back.

Have a good Easter break and here's hoping for a mild, dry Spring so we can get onto the water on a regular basis. Ever the optimist!

