



The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

July 2014

editor – Nigel Duffin – webmaster@leanderseascouts.co.uk

Beavers outdoor adventures



Leander Beavers have had a busy summer term. Activities have been focussed around the Outdoor Challenge and Adventure Activity badges.

The term started with the St George's Day Parade at the end of April. In May, five Beavers were able to attend the District Beaver camp at Polyapes.

In June we were all disappointed when the District sports day was cancelled due to bad weather. This was more than made up for two weeks later, when the Beavers were able to attend one day of the excellently organised X-Camp event. The weather was ideal, with plenty of sunshine but not too hot. This was a great opportunity to experience many activities, ranging from water slide to crate building. The bird of prey display kept them all enthralled and the range of singing and dancing from the talent show (although of variable

quality) was very entertaining. Thanks to Neil Bennett for helping out on the day.

At the end of June we visited Holly Lodge in Richmond park as part of the Outdoor challenge badge. There we learnt about the varied flora and fauna in the park and the Countryside Code.



In July we were able to run a session involving a treasure hunt/quiz in Canbury gardens. Thanks to the extra parent helpers who supported this session.

Our final event was the District Hike from Southwood along the Hogsmill river to St John's Church

via the playground at Knollmead. The Beavers had a really enjoyable time.

With the bank holidays and numerous other activities, we were only able to go swimming at Teddington pool once this term. Congratulations to Oliver Spray for completing his stage 2 swimming badge.

At the end of term we said goodbye to nearly half of our Beaver Colony. Daniel Wallington, Timothy Bennett, Josi Sparks, James Mclauchlan, Oscar Annett and Isaac Fewtrell all swam up to Cubs after completing all six Beaver Scout challenge badges and so qualify for the Chief Scout Bronze Award – a great achievement – well done. Joesph Davis and Yana Chilcote also move up to Cubs after managing to complete five challenge badges. We also said goodbye to Eddie Fox and Wilfred Tomlyn who are sadly moving away.

After four years the time has come for me to move on from Beavers and so I will be 'swimming up' to help out at Scouts during the Autumn term. So, if you are looking for a very rewarding challenge, I strongly recommend considering becoming Beaver Scout Leader. Please feel free to talk to me about this if you are interested.

Richard (Beaver Scout Leader)

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

Headquarters: 92 Lower Ham Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 5BB

www.leanderseascouts.co.uk — Registered Charity Number 290029



Cub Summer Camp

It was with trepidation some Fridays ago that the leaders loaded up the trailer and set off from Leander. Having run a few one-night camps over the last year, we were keen to branch out with two nights under canvas. This meant that Friday evening was always going to be busy, getting the Cubs there after a busy school week and getting the camp set up.

The Cubs arrived full of enthusiasm in the early evening and got straight to work setting up the tents. After a few fumbles, the tents were up and beds set out but, before they could use them, there was the small matter of a night hike to complete.

Dusk was falling fast but, armed with torches and glow sticks, the intrepid Cubs set forth. They put in a great effort navigating through the countryside in the dark. While they may have been a bit tired, they looked proud as they were welcomed back to the camp fire and well-earned mug of cocoa.

Dawn broke on Saturday morning with bright sun and with a loud rendition of YMCA from one tent, until they were politely requested to refrain! The morning was spent gathering and chopping firewood, and practising fire-lighting. With the fire ready, we then moved on to preparing lunch, backwoods style!



With a varied menu of Nettle soup, Mackerel à la Newspaper, and Tin Foil Pasties, the Cubs were kept hard at work before relaxing with an excellent lunch. The soup was deemed particularly good by the leaders and well worth the occasional sting to the pickers.



After lunch, with the day getting ever hotter, the next challenge was to construct a catapult capable of launching a water bomb at the opposition. This proved more challenging than anticipated as the leaders' demonstration catapult struggled to reach a range of one metre.



However, with the help of the few Scouts who accompanied us on the camp, the Cubs did far better, managing to reach the rival teams before an all-out water fight broke out. Having been thoroughly cooled down,



we had a relaxing time for the rest of the afternoon before dinner, then a camp fire complete with songs (and guitar!).

After two nights under canvas and a very busy Saturday, everyone was a bit slower to get moving on the Sunday morning. However, after another hearty breakfast, the Cubs put all their energy into the mini assault course. Then, all too soon, it was time to pack up and head home.

What I found most rewarding over the weekend was seeing how the young people flourished in the face of adversity. Some Cubs who may not be the best at paying attention or following instructions in our weekly meetings can really show their ability and resilience when faced with a challenge. This can come as a surprise to us leaders and hopefully lets the Cubs see what they can achieve.

The smooth running of the camp is entirely due to the excellent team of Leaders and parents who took part. Particular thanks go to Chris for organising the delicious and plentiful food, and to Andy and Viki for our Saturday evening dinner. But most of all, I am proud of all of the Cubs who came with us and made it into a really excellent weekend.

*Tim Pullen
Cub Scout Leader*

Scout Regatta Successes

Leander had many successes in the National Regatta on 5th/6th July on the Thames Ditton Reach. We did not win any of the overall age groups, but competition from other Sea Scout Groups is getting greater and the trophies were well spread. Many of our competitors were young in their age range and this should put them in a strong position next year. Certainly, everyone who took part had a thoroughly enjoyable day.

One crew which did come 1st was the under 12½ gig crew. They must have been rowing too fast for the photographer, but they look very pleased at being presented with their cup.



Ollie was 2nd in the under 12½ kayak – he certainly has style!



Leanders have always shown their seamanship abilities in sculling over the stern, but other Groups have certainly been practising. Iona and Bertie are looking good, though.



The under 14 gig reached the semi-final and they certainly put their backs into pulling.



The under 14 double dinghy came a fantastic first – they make it look so easy!



In the under 16 age group, Clare pulled well, but did not get through to the final.



Gabriel put on a great display, with plenty of spray, to come 2nd in the kayak.



The gig also came 2nd – you can see them rowing well in time and bending those oars.

Sam, near to his 18th birthday, crowned a great history of sculling over the stern in the Regatta to come first in the under 18 category, really showing how it should be done.



Award for Merit



Karen was, of course, far too busy to be photographed wearing it – she is looking to the future, as you can see! – but she has recently been awarded the Award for Merit. The presentation was made by the District President, Bob Bushell, at the Leader AGM.

The Award for Merit is given for outstanding service of not less than 12 years. It implies keen, conscientious, imaginative and dedicated service over a sustained period.

You can try 'pinning it on' her, by cutting and pasting, but I think you might find that she is just much too big a person!!



Leander AGM

At the Group Annual General Meeting in June, Karen nominated Nigel Duffin as Chair of the Executive. The following were elected as members of the Group Executive Committee:
 Les Lidington (Secretary),
 Paul Lomas-Clarke (Treasurer),
 Penny D'Souza, Fiona Firth,
 Andrew Jackson, Keith Maund,
 Dick Riches.

Why 'Leander'?



Most will have seen the back-board carrying two brass plaques at the river end of the Boat Deck and some will know the story of a grandson of Captain Francis Grove presenting a 32ft long 12-oared cutter called 'Leander' to the Group on the 100th anniversary of his grandfather's joining the Navy.

I have tried for some time, unsuccessfully, to find out who this descendant was but feel it is time to put my research on paper so others can follow it up and perhaps complete the link.

Certainly, the story about his being Captain aboard HMS Leander at The Battle of Trafalgar is totally incorrect. (Francis Grove was only six in 1805 and there was no HMS Leander at Trafalgar.) Neither was he ever Captain of HMS Leander.

Francis Grove was born in 1799. He was the second son of Edward Grove, Deputy Lieutenant of Staffordshire; his mother Caroline was a daughter of The Dean of Lichfield.

Francis joined the navy on 28th January 1813 as 'Fst.-cl. Vol.' One could enter the navy either from a Royal Naval College or directly as a 'Volunteer First Class', which involved three years training before being appointed as a Midshipman. On joining there was no initial training – it was straight onto a ship.

Francis was immediately appointed to the 38-gun ship HMS Daedalus, that was due to sail into the Indian Ocean. On 2nd July 1814 Daedalus was wrecked near Ceylon. He then served the rest of his three years in the East Indies on the 36-gun ship Theban, the Volage (22) and Malacca (36) after which he joined the 74-gun HMS Minden as a Midshipman, (an early appointment). On his return to

Portsmouth in July 1815 he had short spells on HMS Hyacinth (20) and Manly (12).

His next appointment was to HMS LEANDER, bearing the flag of Rear Admiral David Milne. Leander was a fourth rate frigate, 174ft long, 45ft beam, built of pitch pine in 1813. She carried 26 42-pounder cannonades and 32 24-pounder cannon, 58 guns in all. In June of 1816 they sailed for Gibraltar.

The Corsairs, the Barbary Pirates, controlled almost the entire North African coast. They had, for two or three hundred years been a problem for all shipping in the Mediterranean by plundering the ships and taking all the crews and passengers as slaves. At times they were active well into the Atlantic and even as far as the English Channel. They were ruled by the 'Dey', a sort of king, who was based in Algiers.

The British Navy had put the French and Spanish navies out of action for some time and a peace agreement had been signed with the United States, so, as there was nobody else to pick a fight with it was decided to pay the Dey a visit. A fleet was assembled at Gibraltar. It comprised 20 ships led by Admiral Lord Exmouth in the first rate, 104-gun ship HMS Charlotte followed by the second rate Impregnable (98 guns), the Superb, Minden and Albion (all 74 guns). Then came the fourth rate HMS Leander and smaller frigates and brigs. There were also many gun and rocket barges. (The rating of ships, first rate etc., did not actually describe the ship in any way. It related to the pay scale of the Captain.)

By chance some Dutch ships paid a visit to Gibraltar (we were not at war with them at the time). They heard of the plan to sort out the Dey, they thought it

sounded a good wheeze and asked if they could join in. So five Dutch frigates and one corvette carrying a total of 148 guns increased the fleet.

The Dey was in Algiers; he had got to hear of the plan, so he assembled 40,000 men and all the guns that he could muster (nearly 1000) in and around the city walls, battlements, warehouses, jetties and quays in the port. He also had most of his fleet in port to help with its defence.

In the evening of August 26th 1816 the British/Dutch fleet arrived some two miles off Algiers bay. In the morning an ultimatum was sent to the Dey: 'Agree to stop all your pirate activities and free all your Christian slaves, or else!' (Or words to that effect). 'Oh, and we want your answer by lunchtime.' While the Dey was mulling this over and loading his guns, the fleet manoeuvred into the harbour. Leander anchored in a position opposite the fish-market battery as instructed in Lord Exmouth's very detailed plan. 'Just a pistol shot away', (about 50 yards).

The Dey didn't reply. The stand off lasted until 2.30pm when somebody fired a shot (there is no agreement on who). Then, it seems, all hell broke loose. There are very many accounts of the action, which was extremely fierce, and at very short range. It only lasted a few hours but it would take several pages to describe it here. It was a very bloody battle with many casualties on both sides but the British fleet withdrew intact, the Dey's fleet was destroyed and he capitulated, freeing all his slaves and paying reparations.

During this short action Leander fired 3680 rounds of shot (about one every five seconds). They used 21,700lbs of powder – ten tons!! Thirty of Leander's crew were killed and 120 were injured.

There were at least eleven Midshipmen aboard HMS Leander: three were killed, four were severely wounded and one slightly wounded, according to



The bombardment of Algiers, an 1823 painting by Martinus Schouman

the records. Some are mentioned by name in different accounts. One record states that Francis Grove was 'Mentioned in Despatches' for his 'exemplary zeal'. Lord Exmouth's 'despatches', (which were sent home with Leander) were published in 'The London Gazette' but Francis Grove's name is not there. He was promoted to Sub Lieutenant on 16th September.

The London Gazette published a special issue on Sunday September 15th 1816, wholly devoted to 'The Storming of Algiers'.

Although Francis Grove continued his career in the navy and rose through the ranks to Captain, he never saw any further action. He retired in 1856. Those three or four hours on HMS Leander must have been the most exhilarating, exciting and frightening hours of his life. It is little wonder his family remembered it.

Researching Francis Grove's family history does not easily identify the benefactor. To make such a gift, one would expect the person to be in their 40s or older, perhaps with a son in the Scouts, (although Skipper Ebbage never suggested that). Aged 40 or 50 in 1913, this person could have been Francis's grandchild.

Francis married Emily Ure, daughter of George Ure of the Bengal Medical Establishment, on 9th December 1825. They lived in Edinburgh and had four sons and two daughters over the

next 13 years. We don't know when his wife died, but Francis married again on 10th September 1839. His second wife was Mary Roberts, daughter of William Roberts, a banker in Glasgow.

It has been difficult to follow Scottish records relating to Francis's first sons and daughters, however his second family is easier. Edward William Grove was born in 1841 and Charles Bagot Grove in 1843, both were born in Scotland.

Charles Bagot Grove was married in 1881 to Margaret, a British subject born in America, but there was no issue.

Edward William Grove was in the 71st Highlanders. He married Ella in 1876; they had two daughters born in Scotland. They moved to Hanover Square in London. In the 1890s they moved to Tetsworth, Oxon and then back to Westminster in 1901. There is no obvious link to Kingston.

Francis Grove died at his home, Kincardine Castle near Auchterarder in Scotland on the 2nd August 1864.

A search through the 1911 census shows a number of 'Grove' families living within 10 miles or so of Kingston but none is an obvious choice as benefactor.

While there is no doubt the gift of the 'Leander' to the 2nd Kingston has been indirectly

responsible for inspiring us and even changing the lives of many over the last hundred years, it was not a particularly useful gift at the time.

She was big and heavy and beginning to rot. At 32ft it took two Scouts to man each oar and even then they could not reach the stretchers properly. It did go up to Hampton Court a few times but it was not long before it was on the slipway at Burgoyne's Boatyard for repairs – serious repairs.

Unfortunately, the war intervened and, one day in 1914 or 1915, Burgoyne's had to clear the decks to carry out work for the Navy and 'Leander' had to go. About one week's notice was given. The Scouts had no way of moving her over land, even so, where to? If she was put back into the water she would sink.

The only answer, reluctantly, was to burn her. The coxswain's backboard was saved and the copper nails and mooring ring from the stem post were recovered from the ashes. The copper nails were sold for £1 or so and the mooring ring was kept (by Eric Ebbage no doubt – 'might come in useful, old man!').



Fifteen or more years later, when the Group had acquired the present HQ site in Lower Ham Road and some boats, mooring rings were needed. Out came the old Leander ring and Eric Batson was asked to make more to the same design. The new ones were made with a spike underneath to be set in concrete whereas the original was mounted on a plate to be bolted to the stem post. So next time you visit HQ take a look at the rings on the river bank, the upstream one is fixed with bolts. It is the 100-year-old survivor from the ashes of 'Leander'.

Roland Spencer (Leander Guild)