



The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

May 2015

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Scouts back on the water

It seems like it's been a long wait, but the Troop are finally back on the water!



We've had a quite a challenge before us, as nearly a third of the Scouts had never been on the water with us prior to the beginning of this term. It's a steep learning curve but they have all seemed to have taken to it like the proverbial ducks to ... err well, you see where this is going.

Thanks to Andrew and John we can run kayaking and canoeing alongside the rowing and Seamanship skills activities on Tuesday evenings. We've even managed to get the sailing dinghies out but, true to historic form, the wind died halfway

through the evening and I had to do some towing back to the HQ.



It's coming to that time of year when we have to start thinking about the Regatta and how to put together our strongest crews. With that in mind I've run a couple of Sculling over the stern teaching sessions to try and bring the number capable of this skill up into double figures. It's quite a rarity these days to find any Sea Scouts who can do it but I'm determined to pass these skills on to as many of our Scouts as I can.

On other non-nautical matters, the Troop took part in the St George's day parade with not exactly a full complement but my thanks go to those who did

make the effort. The parade will take a much different and hopefully more palatable form next year which should help the participation numbers.

Lastly, Jim and I ran a small weekend camp at Polyapes where we managed to cover a wide range of activities including, fire-lighting, backwoods cooking, knife work, wood cutting, as well as bivouac and emergency shelter building. As part of our camp warden duties, I had the wonderful task of painting one of the toilet blocks which was certainly the highlight of my weekend ... Not!

The Scouts also learnt how to cook a Chinese stir-fry for our dinner as well as the all-important washing up and drying skills post eating. Most importantly they learnt how to ensure that, if you spill your hot chocolate, it doesn't go on the chairs in the Warden's hut!

Russ



Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

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



Pack Pack Pack!

We always look forwards to the Summer term as it gives us a chance to get out and about and take advantage of the light evenings. We started the term by tackling the Communicator Activity badge. The Cubs spent a great evening outside trying to communicate with each other using a range of techniques including semaphore, Morse code and sign language, some more successful than others!



There has been a major change to the programme and badges across all sections of Scouting, and this term we've started to introduce this into our programme. While most of the Activity badges (round red ones) are staying the same the Challenge Awards have been updated. You can find all the details at prepared.scouts.org.uk.

Overall, I think the changes are pretty positive, with greater emphasis on adventure, outdoor activities and personal responsibility. We're kicking off the new badges with the Our Adventure Challenge Award, which involves the Cubs taking part in a range of adventurous activities, including raft building, sledging on ringos, hiking, playing water games and kite flying.



Once again we sent five intrepid footballers to the District 5-a-side competition. This attracts a lot of strong teams from around the District and we faced some tough opposition. Our team did their best, and, while we didn't make it through to the quarter-finals, I was impressed by how well they played together as a team. With a strong defence and excellent goalies we conceded very few goals across all the

games. So congratulations to George, Ed O, Eddie S, Jack and Daniel P for your great effort.

In amongst the various badges and activities we still have time for the occasional Wide Game, beloved of Scouts down the ages. So we spent our last meeting before half term in some pleasant evening sunshine in Richmond park with the Cubs dashing through the woods in pursuit of each other. The Cubs enjoyed themselves and also came to realise how well camouflaged a green Cub sweatshirt is amongst the bracken and undergrowth in the Park.

We hope the weather continues to be favourable as we look forward to our camp at the end of June and the rest of our activities in the second half of term.

Tim, Chris and Richard



90 years ago – a Grand Howl by the River in 1925

AGM

The Group Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 13th July, at 7.30pm in the Headquarters.

The annual report and accounts will be presented, with opportunity for questions. Officers and members of the Group Executive Committee for the coming year will be elected.

The meeting is expected to last about an hour and refreshments will be served.

Water Activity Qualifications

This Summer we are revising our approach to gaining Water Activity Qualifications. As there has been an update to the Scout Programme and badges, now is a good time to start the initiative. Over the Summer, all Scouts will be assessed for their competence and ability in pulling, kayaking and canoeing (sailing will be dealt with separately). Obviously time on the water should be enjoyable but the River Thames is becoming increasingly busy on our reach and we do need all our young people to be safe and very competent when involved in water activities.

Our intention is that National Governing Body qualification will be awarded. Participating in the British Canoe Union Paddlepower/Star awards and the British Rowing Explore Rowing course will also gain the Scout Paddlesport staged badge and Pulling badge.



The first kayaking and canoeing session will be at the end of June, as much of the assessment will need to be carried out at weekends – an ideal time for delivering tuition and practice.

Coxswain

Beavers gain Chief Scout Awards

Leander Beavers have been growing and achieving many awards over the past few months, and at the end of last term I proudly awarded seven of the Beavers with their Chief Scout Bronze Award.

This term they have been covering all elements of the Safety Activity Badge, from Green Cross Code to Stranger Danger. They also had an outing to Pets at Home where they all were able to hold/pet a Guinea Pig and Rabbit and fondly named both. After that they were taken around the aquarium and reptile section which they all enjoyed but – I must confess – along with a few of the mums the reptiles were not our ideal area to be in.

Over the final weeks of this Summer Term they will be covering different forms of communication and starting their Outdoor Camping Skills. Leander Beavers will also be competing in this year's Beaver Sports Morning (Sat 20th June) at Kingsmeadow against the rest of the Royal Kingston Scout District.

The Beaver Colony is finally back up to 24 members with a well supported parent rota. I have been covering (with no official Beaver Scout Leaders), but time is running out fast to find the NEW Leadership Team, as I will soon have to hand over the reins and head back to the Explorer Scout Unit full-time on a Thursday.

Karen

Fundraising

 Please sign up for Leander when you order those Summer treats online – beachwear, Bacardi, barbecues!

Our supporters have raised over £500 in total so far – nearly £40 in the last quarter to March.

www.easyfundraising.org.uk

Explorers

Leander Explorer Scout Unit has grown in the past six weeks from 16 to 25 members. They have all been out finding their feet on the river again (an interesting picture!), but have also been doing their best to help out other sections, whether it be for their Bronze D of E or simply due to Leander not having enough adult helpers. In the coming weeks they will be pushed through their paces to claim a seat in this year's National Sea Scout Regatta squad (Sunday 5th July) and Great River Race crews (Saturday 12th September).



Lastly, Alex, James and I would especially like to thank the 13 members of the Unit that attended this year's St Georges Day Parade in Tolworth, as it is the best ever turn out the Unit has ever had since the section started.

Karen, Alex & James

New at HQ



With over a hundred members now, we need plenty of boats and the Boat Deck is getting full. So a new rack is gradually emerging from the weeds in the back 'garden'. It will hold four Coypus and keep them under cover through the Winter ... when the roof is in place.