



The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

December 2020

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Scouting gets ‘amber light’

STOP PRESS: Just announced. Scouts go back to ‘amber’! Limited indoor and outdoor activities can start again, sections can resume where they left off a month ago.



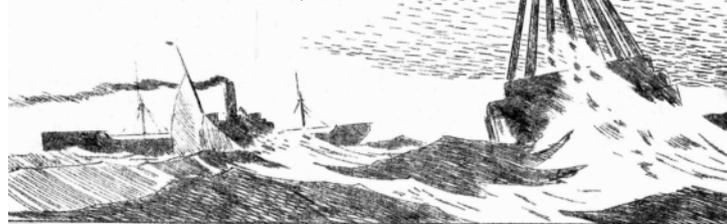
After a period of being able to run kayaking sessions for Scouts, Cubs and Explorers, Leander went back in lockdown, waiting for the latest news on whether we would be able to resume outdoor activities. We have been very fortunate: all the Leaders have spent considerable time and effort making sure activities could be run safely and enjoyably. Dividing those attending into separate small groups ensured proper safe distancing and required that all the kayaks were disinfected and washed down after use. There was a very keen attendance; although somewhat chilly on the water, everyone participating really enjoyed getting out again. We can only hope that these and other activities can continue.

Although the Headquarters had closed down and our hirers have stopped, the Group has still been active, there are a number of major projects in progress, most importantly finding an environmentally suitable solution for updating our heating system. Nigel has also completed major works, building storage cupboards on the Main Deck, which were becoming a necessity for some of our hirers who need items of equipment for their activities.

Keeping in touch has been vital for all of us, Zoom has made all the difference, we have had no end of virtual meetings that help keep the Group moving forward and staying up to date on our essentials and plans. (The app will definitely drive you mad though, if you do too many sessions!).

New Year is not far away. At least we can soon get on with some Scouting. We hope everyone stays well and do enjoy Christmas as much as you can.

Robin Burr, GSL



A ‘Little Love’



Thanks to Waitrose and their ‘Give a Little Love’ campaign to help local communities and charities, Leander has been awarded a very generous donation of £333.33. Andrew is pictured receiving the cheque from a member of their team.

We plan to put it towards some repairs to the rowing boats as our Home Counties Gigs are definitely in need of ‘a little love’ at the moment.

Andrew

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

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



New Executive Committee Chair for Leander

It is with great pleasure that I write to you as your new Chair of Leander. Like many of you, I'm a parent whose kids have benefitted hugely from their time at Leander. I've been a Trustee and helped on the Committee for a few years, and, as a keen paddler and rower, some of you may know me as a Scout and Cub helper too.

I want to thank Cathy, Tim, Russ, Alex and Robin and all their parent helpers for the genuinely amazing achievement of 'keeping things going' since March. The new risk assessment and review process has been challenging, and their options to deliver safe, fun activities have been restricted and constantly changing.

I've been lucky to be a part of some of these activities, and it has been wonderful to see smiles on young people's faces as they see their pals again. As we look ahead to more hopeful times, I know this Leader Team

will do everything they can to get back to exciting indoor and outdoor activities.

I have an ask too. For those who can, please think about offering to help Leander by giving your time and expertise. We need someone who can lead a new IT initiative – we're going to change how we use emails, shared drives, etc. We also need another Parent Trustee on the Executive Committee – someone to join a few meetings in the year and help to comply with increasingly complex legislative requirements.

Those of us who do help notice something surprising – we get out more than we put in. So if you're thinking about making 2021 better, or giving something back to your local community, feel free to drop me an email or give me a call.

Last, and by no means least, a huge thank you to Nigel for his many years of service. Unlike

some other HQs in the news recently, I've experienced a very smooth and gracious handover! I am also starting to fully appreciate the incredible job Nigel has done. I am reminded every day that Leander is an extremely special community organisation, fuelled by volunteers who share the same passion – to give young people opportunities to develop which they simply can't get anywhere else.

As soon as we can, we will organise a family event at HQ to which you will all be invited. In the meantime, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and to wish you a wonderful Christmas and New Year with your families.

Andrew

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Scouts remain active

The Scout section, despite all the restrictions, have still managed to remain active during the Summer and early Autumn months. Since July we've managed to fit in eight kayaking sessions with two to three groups taking part at staggered start times during each session. We also managed to run a mini-Night Hike around Ham House before the latest Lockdown commenced.

We were all set to restart indoor meetings at the HQ, with all our risk assessments and planning in place, when the latest restrictions shut us down again.

It can't really be helped though and we'll just have to make the best of what comes our way.

At least we have achieved something this term, if only on a small scale. Hopefully outdoor activities will be allowed to commence in December but we'll have to wait and see how kind the weather is going to be to us and plan accordingly to suit. Fingers crossed!

I hope you all have a enjoyable festive holiday and look forward to a much improved New Year.

Russ



70 years ago

In his report on the RN [Admiralty] Inspection in July 1950, the Inspecting Officer, Commander Harrison, noted:

After inspecting the Patrols, I was given a series of cards with many and various types of work and instruction written on them. From these I selected a suitable subject for each Patrol and handed it to the Patrol Leader.

Having seen the Patrols at work, I was taken to see the real practical work of the evening. A raft was first constructed on the river bank, oil drums, spars and lashings being used. When completed, a heavy trek cart was placed aboard and, with the assistance of some strong swimmers, was successfully ferried across the river. On arrival at the far bank, sheerlegs were rigged and the cart was lifted ashore. The cart was then replaced on the raft and made a safe return journey back to headquarters.

Virtually Beavers

Beavers have tried to stay active since March, despite the strange 'Covid' times. Not everyone is able to join us online, but we hope everyone feels able to keep in touch and join us when they can.



From April we learned to take it in turns and share lots of silliness in our Zoom Room. We did a scavenger hunt around the house, presenting a wide variety of things including pets and parents! We learned some first aid, watched videos and shared screens and found things around the house to bandage. Intrepid parents facilitated and supervised toasting marshmallows over a candle, BBQ or fire and Beavers built a den or put up a tent and slept in it for our 'Camp At Home' challenge, for which we earned a great Red T-shirt.

Learning some simple knots was helped along by using carefully chosen You Tube videos and Yogi demonstrating on screen. Chocolate bananas were prepared, baked and tasted in front of laptops and phones, and we shared our local wildlife knowledge, photos and drawings.

We sang lots of campfire songs aided by Scoutadelic, our favourite being Glen www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwCQTTyK2U4&t=52s

Many a delicious meal was cooked at home for a challenge. I hope that all kept them busy! Seeing the Beavers each week certainly kept Yogi, Baloo and lorek feeling sane and connected.

As information was released by the National Youth Agency and The Scout Association, it became

clear that we had lots of risk assessments to write and submit for approval. In September 2020 we were back on Zoom waiting for clearance to meet face to face.



We learned to look after our teeth and tackled some Global Issues badge items, learning about endangered animals, recycling and Fair Trade.

We had an online educational session with The Big Cat Sanctuary learning about conservation and ecosystems and 'met' Maya the Jaguar and Willow the cheetah of BBC Fame (Big Cats about the House). Yogi had managed to get a personal video message for Leander from Giles Clarke when she visited in the summer, who was excited to hear we were getting involved.



You can find out about them and their work at: thebigcatsanctuary.org.

We were finally able to meet face to face at HQ to do a bit of craft and learn a new way of being together in the space.

We had a great session making clean water filters from a bottle, coffee filter paper, cotton wool, sand and pebbles which worked surprisingly well.



Sadly we went back into lockdown so did a Drumming Cool Drumming School workshop with Max online. We had planned a sleepover some time ago which was transformed to a Space Cadet Academy weekend with three sessions, including one with the National Space Agency. Ask us anything about food and toilets in space and we will know the answer! Eek.



We have been pleased to invite Cubs to make up numbers in our online educational sessions and it is great to see previous Beavers whom we have missed.

We are planning our flexible programme for the coming months and hope to be able to see each other again soon. We will be able to go online or meet at HQ with minimal fuss now we have the hang of it all. Wish us luck!

*Yogi, Cathy Johnson
Baloo, Helen Farrell
lorek, Jennifer Wallington*