



# The Water Rat

Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

March 2006

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## Skipper's Scrawl

As the evenings start to draw out, we can begin to look forward to getting back on the river again on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. That said, it was good to see the Troop embarking on an evening row last week, accompanied by some of the Explorers.

At least with the River one can go either up or downstream and as such there is little chance of taking the wrong course. Perhaps then the Troop need to do a little more work on their map and compass work before the next night hike! Never mind, it is the entering that counts, providing we can learn by our mistakes. (Mind you, I can recall as a Senior Scout, aged 16, following the bank in a fog, downstream of Tower Bridge and ending up rowing round one of the large docks! I

don't know whether or not the present Group Chairman was with me at the time.) – *not in my ship's log, but, going to Bradfield, I did take a wrong turning in the fog at the mouth of the Stour and carelessly sailed up the Orwell! before GPS, of course – Nigel*

Preparations are now well under way for the Group Family camp, but please make sure Karen has all the necessary forms in within the next week. A new marquee has just been delivered, so will be erected for the first time at Longridge. Let's hope we don't need to rely on it, but at least we will have somewhere to all get together if it should rain.

I was pleased to be able to invest five new Beavers this week, and even

more pleased to learn that they could all swim! So well done to Dick and his swimming sessions.

Details of this year's St George's Day Parade will be handed out to sections shortly; in the mean time, please be sure to note the date in your diaries. Sunday April 23rd. This year it will be our Cub Pack's turn to do one of the readings so we need to give the Pack our full support.

Keith

## Dates for your Diary

Sunday April 23 – St George's Day Parade

Monday May 8 – Leander Executive Meeting, 8pm at HQ

May 20/21 – Group Camp at Longridge

June 5 – Leander Group AGM at HQ

## Survey

The Scout Association is conducting a survey to help understand more about what parents of Scouts know about the Movement and Scout activities. It is considering producing more information for parents and would like to hear your views before 7th April 2006. All answers will be treated in confidence and will be used anonymously.

[www.nfpsynergy.net/ScoutAssociationParentInformationSurvey](http://www.nfpsynergy.net/ScoutAssociationParentInformationSurvey)



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## Coxswain's Corner

With the long cold Winter, the Scouts have been glad to be indoors, although there are always lots of outdoor events to take part in. The County Cooking Competition in early February is always a highly competitive event, for which we prepare with our own patrol cooking competition a week or so before. It's amazing the high standard of preparation and execution that goes into each patrol's menu - some very tasty meals are the result of two hours' preparation, all done on camp cooking equipment. Thanks to Hannah, Ollie and Adrian for their efforts in the County Competition - a very creditable 6th place out of 26 teams.

The County Night Exercise at the beginning of March saw over 30 teams from around the county navigating around Oxshott and Esher Commons, then camping overnight at Polyapes, our District camp site at Stoke D'Abernon. Yes, a very cold night, but enjoyed by all. Rhys, Ollie, Andrew, Annabel and Lian had an 'interesting' night, just going slightly off course with their route. It's easy to criticise, but night navigation in unfamiliar country can be very challenging.

## Beavers

We have had another lovely term at Leander. This term we have been working towards our Discovery Challenge Badge. Our first experiment involved watching red ink move up the stalk of celery, proving that osmosis is how plants gain water and nutrients. The rocket explosion showing how bicarbonate and vinegar can react was very exciting, however on our third attempt more bicarbonate and vinegar solution ended up on me, rather than propelling the rocket.

Card making for Valentines Day was a delight, some very lucky people got some beautiful cards using crystal hearts and flowers or the optional extra of boogly eyes! We have designed, painted and fired our own mugs and shortly will have an opportunity to create our own pencil cases using textile pens.

We were able to assist the Thames Landscape Trust with the clearance of overgrown sycamores and lots of rubbish from the riverside between Canbury Gardens and the Half Mile Tree, resulting in the first clear sightlines down the river for some years. A great improvement.

Unfortunately our regular swimming trips to Richmond Pools on the Park have had to be curtailed as the pool is now managed by a commercial leisure group, prices have rocketed, no discount, and we have been made to feel somewhat unwelcome. As swimming proficiency is essential, we are currently looking for another venue.

Badgework, nautical skills, a first aid evening, principles of flight and making an aeroplane have all featured in the weekly programme. As Easter approaches, we have St George's Day Parade to prepare for, Family camp, the District 24/7 weekend and of course, Nawaka 2006 to look forward to.

We have been particularly fortunate in meeting the Scout Leader of a Netherlands Scout Group, Scouting

Our guest speaker, Dr Jim Blackburn arrived in full theatre greens complete with eye torches and stethoscopes. The water relay race using 50ml syringes was particularly successful as the techniques was about skill rather than just speed and allows all ages to be successful. Using our living display person, Tom, to be drawn on was slightly less successful. The anatomically correct drawings of liver, heart, and other major organs took two weeks to wash off!

Card making and salt dough modelling are to come, and we shall finish the term with an Easter Egg hunt, and smashing the huge Easter Egg full of sweeties, pinata style.

Amy

Leeghwater Badhoevedorp, from near Amsterdam, who will be on the same sub camp as Leander at Nawaka. The Troop is busy preparing a profile of every Scout going to camp, so that we can exchange emails and can really enjoy meeting and getting to know a Troop from another country.

Hopefully, Spring will have sprung by the time we meet after Easter, ready to get out on the water. The first meeting after Easter will be Tuesday 2nd May.

Coxswain

## HQ cleaning

At its meeting this month, the Group Executive Committee agreed that, in order to maintain the appearance and cleanliness of our Headquarters, we would need to employ someone to clean on a regular basis.

Some of you will know that our rota of Sunday cleaning parties has not been working at all well over the last few months. It has led, on more than one occasion, to families left standing outside in the cold because no-one had arrived with the key.

This means that these Sunday working parties are now cancelled.

We do not want to incur unnecessary expense, so this decision does not affect the obligation on all users: boys, girls, helpers, parents, leaders, to leave the HQ in a tidy state, suitable for the next occupants, after all meetings and activities.

Thanks to those who have done their cleaning stint!

Nigel Duffin

## Editorial

Sorry that this is a short two-pager this month. Don't forget to send lots of photos and reports for the May issue.