

The Water Rat

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Skipper's Scrawl

Firstly, a thank-you to everyone who helped with the National Sea Scout Regatta – in preparation of food, setting out the course on the River, setting up tents and stalls on the towpath, certificate writing, boat marshalling, and, of course, the clearing up afterwards. A lot of hard work went into the event and everything went well on the day – enjoyed by about 200 Sea Scouts and 65 Sea Rangers. Well done also to the Leander team, who came third overall and won several events.

I was pleased to be able to visit the Cub Camp at Polyapes. Despite the rain and mud (I'm sure all the washing machines were busy after the camp), all the boys seemed to be having a thoroughly enjoyable time. Well done to John Dadds and all the leaders who helped and a special thanks to the Venture Scouts for setting up the camp. Next year, hopefully, we shall have another Group/family Camp, so Beavers and Scouts can attend as well.

In this day and age, there are many bad reports on the news and in the press of the youth of today. It makes me very pleased to record that, over the last few months, I have had several very favourable comments from members of the public regarding behaviour, helpfulness and smartness of Leander Scouts and Venture Scouts – at events outside normal Scout meetings. The most recent was the stewarding at the opening of the new bandstand on Canbury Gardens. I hope this continues, as it does much to enhance the image of Scouting, and particularly the standing of Leander in the community. It may also account for the fact that we have a waiting list for the Group.

As usual, lack of leaders is always a problem, but I am pleased to welcome Tim Pearce, who, after having been running Beavers as a 'helper', has agreed to take the plunge and become a warranted Beaver leader. I look forward to Tim being able to recruit other helpers.

The question of adult help was discussed at the AGM and also at the last Executive meeting. As a result, it was decided that parents must take a more active part in assisting leaders, both at meeting and with other activities. From September, it is therefore proposed that at the beginning of each 'term' a list of jobs is drawn up and everyone should put their name down for helping with at least one meeting and also with something else – be it making cakes, cleaning in the HQ, boat maintenance, or transporting Scouts/equipment to camps, etc. Beaver parents are already participating and their first job will be the erection of safety rails at the rear of the HQ, clearing the garden and sowing lawn seed.

Fund raising to improve facilities and update camping equipment, etc. also need to be addressed, and it is hoped to hold a draw in early October. So, please! – don't leave it to others. If everyone plays their part, the workload will be much less.

Finally, on the question of subscription collection – Mick Chinnock (Chief) will be coordinating collection from all sections from September and, hopefully, with all subs being paid by cheque in future, we may be able to return to covenants to increase the value of subs paid.

Keith

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

Headquarters: 92 Lower Ham Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey

Telephone: 0181 549 6286



Cubs' Report

On Saturday 14th June was the District Cubs Sports Day. Leander Cubs broke the first record by having the highest turnout: this was eight boys.

The events were Egg and Spoon Race, Sack Race, Three Legged Race, Wheelbarrow Race, Running 50 metres Running 100 metres, Obstacle Race and the 4x1 Relay Race, Throwing the Cricket Ball and Sergeant Jumping.

We took part in everything, and here are the results:

Egg and Spoon Race: failed to reach the final

Sack Race: failed to reach the final

Three Legged Race: 3rd Robert Mitchell and Daniel Wingrove

Wheelbarrow Race: were in the lead until we changed over, the runner got over-enthusiastic and went too fast for the arms, nearly had a third but settled for fourth.

50 metre Race: 4th runner Sam Whitfield

100 metre Race: 2nd runner Jonathan Freeman

Obstacle Race: 2nd runners Oliver Offord, Alexander Woods, Sam Whitfield, Robin Mitchell, Daniel Wingrove and Jack Maddison

4x1 Relay Race: failed to reach the final

Throwing the Cricket Ball: 1st Jack Maddison, 2nd Sam Whitfield. Jack should have been marked for the over nine and a half and Sam for the under. This way we would have got two firsts.

Sergeant Jump: 1st Jack Maddison

Overall Position: SECOND

Well done, Cubs. Thanks to the Mums and Dads that helped.

The rest of the meetings have been spent doing badge work and games. I want to know: why is it me that goes home shattered, and they can still race around after the meeting has closed? Is it really age?

Chief

Tom's Cub Camp

On Friday evening 27th June, nine Cubs: Robbie, Harry, Jonathan, Joseph, Mark, David, Edward, Jamie and I went off to Polyapes camp site. On Saturday we had breakfast and an inspection. We played a game of Football. Afterwards we split up into half and did a walk from the camp site to a memorial using map coordinates. After lunch we had a game of football then we watched Alexis, Chief and Alex chop a tree down for the camp fire. We watched them light the fire and then lit our own camp fires. When we had eaten supper we sang songs round the camp fire.

On Sunday morning we had breakfast and a full kit inspection. Then we had to pack the patrol tents away. We then had some lunch and played some games and did some tracking. By that time our parents had come and we had to go. IT WAS GREAT!

Tom Pemberton

Chief's Cub Camp

Nine cubs went to Polyapes on Friday 27th June and returned Sunday 29th with a lot more experience in life then they had on 26th June.

I did not arrive until Saturday morning, it was wet and still raining, the cubs had been up since the early hours, having gone to sleep in the early hours. So we started the day by a tent inspection and laying down a few ground rules. Spirits were high and everyone was ready for the first event. Map and compass reading then walk the route, over the unmanned railway crossing and into Oxshott Heath, still raining, back for lunch and a quick game of football.

Afternoon programme, how to light a fire with one match, stopped raining, where do we find dry wood was the question, answer, at the top of a tree, so we with permission went and chopped down a tree, and the fire was lit, YES IT WAS ONLY ONE MATCH with no artificial aid, only the bark of a silver birch was used. Now it was the cubs' turn to light their fire and I must say for their first attempt they did very well.

During the evening, Garry our Venture Leader decided to chop another tree down for the fire, we had a very good sing song, games around the fire until around 10pm, then it was hot drinks and to

bed for the cubs. Never before have I experienced the following: nine cubs are into bed by 10pm, nine cubs are asleep by 10.05, not a sound from anyone.

Sunday, waking up to a dry start, fire still in operation, Church Service is the first item after breakfast. Some games, then it was strike camp let's go home time.

I would like to give my thanks to Venture Scouts Alex and Alexis, to Ness and Gary, to IAN and MIKE, the two fathers who gave up their weekend, and to Sally for the laughs she gave us, not forgetting John Dadds who made the camp possible, and my last thanks must go to Carrol Dadds for the cooking and general help she gave us.

Well done, all of you. Thank you, Cubs, for giving us a good camp.

Chief

Gig Progress

You may have noticed the work in progress on the Home Counties gig "Hermes" we are taking to NaWaKa. This has turned out to be a major rebuild, as a lot more rotten and broken woodwork was found when it was stripped down. The gunwale was broken in about five places, so this has been reinforced with new timber, and all the copper fixings have been checked, tightened and replaced where necessary. I think we have used about 150 3"-5" copper nails and roves so far. The knees have been cut and fixed – a very time consuming process as each knee has to be fitted individually and has to be an accurate fit – there are 22 of them. A knee is a wooden brace that is fixed to the thwart (the cross bench that each oarsman sits on) and to the gunwale, (the wooden reinforcing strip that runs round the top of the hull). The knees stop the hull expanding sideways and retains the gig's proper shape.

When it is finished we should have a magnificently refurbished boat good for a lot more years.

Coxswain

National Sea Scout and Sea Ranger Regatta

Since just past Easter everyone has been preparing and practising for the Regatta. Before we all knew it, it was 6.00am Sunday morning, with everyone there who was racing and other who had come to help. Tents had to be put up along with stalls and the course had to be set up to row down. We couldn't have wished for more perfect weather. The sun shining and the temperature was around 80°F.

Finely around 9.15am the races began. The first race Leander participated in was the under 15½ single skulls, Matt Freeman won and got into the semi-finals, kept on winning and came first overall. The under 13½ gig race was next. Our crew consisted of Danny Wileman, Emny Rhoades, James Ford, Jack Young and the cox, Mathew Freeman. The crew won the heats, semi-final and came second in the final.

The under 15½ gig crew – Matt Freeman, Bassy Tinder, Jonathan Burr, Michael King and Asha Leo as cox – got through to a very exciting final and won by about 6 inches. *(Coxswain's note - This was the race of the regatta, extremely close all the way against a very good Warspite gig crew. Great result!)*

The under 13½ coxed pairs, consisting of Emily Rhoades, Danny Wileman and Mathew King as Cox, got through to the semi finals. In the under 13½ single skulls, James Ford was very unlucky and hit a tree near to the finish. Jonathan Burr did very well in the slalom canoe and came second. In the sculling over the stern, David King was 2nd in the under 20, George Mitchell was second in the under 13½ and Michael King was unlucky to hit the buoy when leading the under 15½ race.

Overall Leander came third which was a good result. Everyone did very well and I think enjoyed themselves.

Emily Rhoades

Scout Report

This does seem to have been an extremely busy period in the calendar, with everybody out on the water, preparations for Nawaka, massive reorganisation of the camp store and rebuilding one of the county gigs. With the large numbers we have now, every Tuesday has seen all the boats out and Laurie has been busy with one and two star canoeists. Saturdays have had variable numbers, there is always a hard core of people who come down but there are quite a few who seem to go shopping a lot.....!

We put a small team into the District Air Rifle competition held at 3rd Malden, the first time for some years, and did very well – thanks to Danny, Michael and Jonathan.

St George's Day saw a good turn out with everyone looking very smart. Although the weather forecast was not good, the sun shone and we could display the Marshal trophy flag as well as the Group's. One day we should get the turnout trophy.

We managed to rearrange the District Night Hike, which took place in early May and seemed to be a great success (*see report*). The groups who took part were very keen and the overall times were actually quite close, Leander teams coming 1st and 3rd was a substantial change from previous year's events.

We held a weekend camp at Chalfont Heights later in the month for all those going to Nawaka. What an introduction for those who had not been camping before! (*see report*). I have been camping for many years and I think that was the heaviest rain I've experienced in this country.

Regatta practice started in June and we entered most of the events in the Regatta (*see report*). We would have done even better than third place if a certain few people had decided to take part. We put in mixed crews in two events, which was the first time we have done this – well done Emily.

Our last official meeting was taken over by 22 Cubs, all desperate to go out on the water, so we got every available boat out (2 gigs, 4 coypus and 2 coypups), and let the Scouts take the Cubs for their first real experience of boating. At least Akela and his helpers had a rest until everyone stormed up to the Main Deck for hot dogs.

We have invested Adam, Alexander and Luke, up from cubs, Laura, who came from Guides, and Torin (who braved Chalfont in his 4th week at Leander).

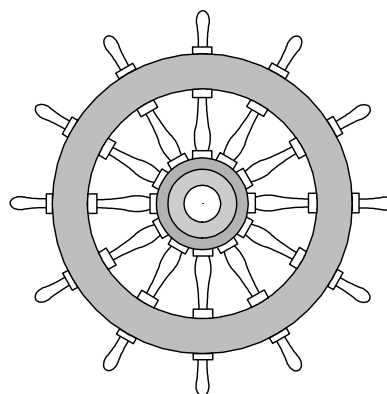
The river has been very busy this summer, with a large number of eights, fours and sculls out. There have been some very near misses (not with Leander) as many of the rowers are totally selfish, do not show any respect to other users or seem to know the basic rules of the road. That means boat crews have to be very vigilant keep a close watch fore and aft and make their moves clearly and in good time.

You may have noticed, in the local papers, the opening of the new Canbury Gardens Bandstand. We were asked if we could act as stewards to the event so eight Scouts, three Ventures and four Leaders attended. It was somewhat of a rush to get there in time, as that afternoon we had just rowed up to Hampton Court and back in the gigs and one or two had forgotten essential parts of their uniform. The organisers were very grateful, we had a mention in the programme and once again we made a good impression on the public. Well done everyone who volunteered.

The preparations for Summer Camp at NaWaKa are reaching a climax, with amazing work being done by Ness handling all the administration and Garry and the Ventures dealing with all the kit we will be taking. Everyone who is going to Nawaka is getting excited, it should be a great experience.

Note for Scouts and Parents: I hope you all have a pleasant summer break - make a note on the calendar, the first meeting after the holidays will be on Tuesday 2nd September.

Coxswain



Beavers

The Beaver Section is going from strength to strength. We are starting in September 1997 with a full complement of 24 boys. Last term we had a strength of 21 with an average turnout of 20.

This term we said goodbye to seven boys: Chris Pearce, Tom Shanahan, William Mitchell, Angus Gardener, Jack Grant, Alex England and Nicholas Reeves, all going up to Cubs. We wish them well and hope they have lots of fun.

I have now agreed to take up the warrant of leadership and run the Beaver section. *However, I still need help to keep going.*

Last term, the boys worked towards their Beaver Scout Challenge Badge. This is set into four sections: exploring, Scouting, caring and personal challenges. The term's programme included a nature walk through Richmond Park. Towards the end of the term, we had a visit from the Metropolitan Police Dog Section. This was enjoyed by all who attended, especially the part where I was chased by the dog. These two events covered the exploring and Scouting parts of the badge. Mums and Dads, please keep up with the personal and caring sections. This badge they can take up to Cubs with them.

Last of all, let me wish you all a happy Summer break, and remember we start again on 8th September at HQ at 18:45 hrs.

Tim Pearce

My Scouting Year

So far this year I have participated in a lot of enjoyable activities with Scouts. In January we went ice skating at the Spectrum which was great fun. Soon after we went swimming at Teddington Pool where I gained more steps towards my advanced swimmers badge.

Later on in May, twelve of us, three girls and nine boys, took part in the District Night Hike. Our team enjoyed themselves immensely and managed to get lost only once. Afterwards we had hot dogs, then all the participants, except Tiffin, returned to Leander for an evening of non-sleep.

On the subject of non-sleep, that was the case on the first night of the NaWaKa training camp at Chalfont Heights. We started to put the tents up at about 9.00pm and it started to rain heavily. Within a short time it was seriously heavy, there was 6 inches of water in our tent and Ness decided to abandon camp for the night. We packed a night's kit and climbed back in the minibus to go back to Leander. Just as we were about to leave we were told that there was a spare hut available, so we spent the night in bunk beds. The rest of the camp consisted of activities like swimming outdoors, archery, orienteering and some abseiling on the climbing wall which got washed out as well.

The training camp prepared us very well for NaWaKa, hopefully the weather won't be as wet. The year has been extremely successful so far and I am sure NaWaKa will be great.

Ruth Osborne

District Night Hike

On Saturday 3rd May at about 7.00pm we met outside St Mary's Church West Horsley. There we were put into teams, such as Leander A, B and C and the same with all the other Scout troops. Then, after being given our maps and fluorescent jackets and instructions we were sent out with 10 minutes between each team. It started to get dark very quickly, which made it quite confusing for some teams as the paths became quite hard to follow, so the torches came in handy.

We then all went back to Leander, around 2.00am we had a massive pillow fight until 2.15 when we were told to stop. In the morning, at about 8.00 we had a delicious breakfast cooked by Ness. After that we had to wash up and clean the floor. I'm sure everyone enjoyed it as much as I did, I'll definitely do it again .

Richard Weatherburn

Venture Report

Since we last reported in the Water Rat we have been very busy, but that is our usual story. We have been helping out with Cubs and Scouts and our main activities have been around the HQ as there is a lot of sorting out to do, with Nawaka only days away. Come September, we should have four more Scouts coming up, the unit will be six strong and who knows what will happen then.

Back in May John Dadds thought it would be a good idea if the Ventures made hot air balloons for the Cubs – giant ones of course. The cutting out and glueing together went well. Getting them to fly was the problem. When tissue paper and flames meet disasters can happen and large amounts of smoke are created, but enough said about that

Cub camp was good fun but very hard work. Alex and Alexis went down on Friday afternoon to set up camp in the pouring rain. A brilliant job they did to, as they also spent the whole of the previous week making new pole sets for the patrol tents. We went for a walk up to the memorial in Oxshott Woods and then had a game in the sand pits. It was still raining, but no one complained. Saturday afternoon was spent chopping down trees and lighting fires. By this time it had stopped raining and Skipper came down for the camp fire. Sunday was dry – well, no rain – and we were all back home by 6.30pm.

The Ventures went to Aquameet on the same weekend as the Regatta, it was the first time they had been, their impressions were good and can we go again next year.

Ness and Gary Smith

NaWaKa - Final Reminder

All medical forms, passports, E111 and pocket money should have been handed in by now. Please call Ness, 0181-384 8955(home) or 0171-814 2200(work), if there is anything outstanding.

Each Scout to bring their personal kit, in the bag they will be using on the journey, to Leander on Saturday 26th July between 1300 (1pm) and 1600 (4pm)

Travel Arrangements: We will be meeting at the **Old Deer Park Car Park** opposite **Richmond Swimming Baths** on the A316 (Chertsey Road) heading towards Twickenham (signposted approximately 300 yards on the left after the traffic lights at the Twickenham Road/Kew Road intersection at Richmond) at 2200 (10pm) on Sunday 27th July. Full uniform, including hat, scarf, lanyard, jumper and trousers, clean shoes and black socks. You should wear your Leander tee shirt underneath your jumper. If you do not turn up in full uniform you will be sent home to get it.

The coach leaves between 2230 – 2245 (10.30pm – 10.45pm) to catch the 0230 Dover-Calais Stena Sealink Ferry. We expect to arrive on site around noon. You will need some food and refreshments for the journey but should be able to stop for breakfast

On the return we leave the site on Thursday 7th August and catch the 1900 (7pm) ferry from Calais to Dover and expect to be back at the Old Deer Park Car Park at about 2330 – 1200 (11.30 – 12.00pm)

Ness

Leander Mums' team - Great River Race

The Great River Race takes place on Saturday 27th September, and this year there may be a mums' entry – at least that was discussed earlier this year. If you want to be part of a crew, we need at least 6/7 people, so get in touch and we

will give you instruction and practice. It is a unique event, you see the River Thames as very few others do, there are hundreds of other boats on the course and when you finish you feel wonderful.