



The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

March 2015

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RN Inspection – February 2015



Staff Officer for Sea Scouts, Lt Cdr David Gray, saw Leander in action – learning and practising – and wanted to know what they had learned and what they thought.

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

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Scouts brave mines, freezing and pancakes

The Troop re-convened after the Christmas break with a challenge game of 'Minefield'. Using poles, ropes and tyres, each team must bridge a gap without touching down inside it and get all the team across without a mine going off. Luckily for the Scouts, the mines must have been heavy duty tank mines as not one of them went off, despite repeated incursions by various feet and hands.

We followed on the next week with some basic knots and lashings and how to construct a simple shelter with a few sticks, lengths of rope and a tarpaulin. I just hope that if the Scouts ever have to actually do this for real, it doesn't rain!

The next three meetings were dedicated to brushing up on our Scouting and nautical knowledge in preparation for the upcoming 'Admiralty Inspection'. The Royal Navy inspection takes quite a lot of time and preparation for both the Leaders and Scouts alike. Leander was the 30th Sea Scout group to be recognised by the Admiralty and have never lost this recognition of our high standards. This is the reason we have 'RN30' on our blue caps used by the Scouts and Cubs.

RN Recognised Sea Scouts are much more than Scouts with a nautical twist. Of the 350 Sea Scout Groups in the UK only 101 are officially recognised. In return for maintaining high standards of Scouting programme, water activities, discipline and smartness, they enjoy access to RN facilities and equipment.

The weekend after the inspection twenty Scouts went to the February Freezer camp at Paccar's campsite. The camp includes a multitude of activities including a large firework display, hovercrafts, quad bikes, zip wire, high wire, bungee trampolines, zorbing and many more. Unfortunately, the weather was somewhat inclement and it felt sometimes like we'd set up camp in 1915 on the Somme. Of course the sun came out just before the parents arrived to pick up the Scouts! Despite the wet weather everyone had a great time and



I'm sure we'll look into going again next year.

After the half term break we decided to give the Scouts a fun evening by running a pancake making night with pancake races at the end. Pancake day was during the half term break but we felt the Scouts deserved a reward for having endured the RN Inspection preparation and event. We didn't even set off the smoke alarms this time.

We decided to get creative for the next couple of weeks and organised a bridge building competition using just straws and tape followed by a device to propel a beanbag using poles, ropes and inner tubes.

The bridges were marked for strength, aesthetics and originality. It was a successful evening but civil engineers amongst you can be assured that your jobs are not under any immediate threat.

The throwing devices (for want of a better term) turned out to be a lot better and inventive than we had originally expected, although some of them did actually propel the beanbag backwards to land further away from the target than from where it had started.

For the penultimate meeting we had hoped to get an external speaker in for the Scouts but, as that didn't come about, we took the whole Troop over to Canbury Gardens for a series of wide games in the dark: string tag and capture the flag, 'Take Down' or tag - Scouts' choice.

The final Tuesday meeting took place at Richmond Park and involved moving volumes of water uphill in the dark ... Jim assured me he had a plan!

After the Easter break the clocks will have gone forward and we can get back out on the water, to do what we do best.

Russ

County Night Exercise



It was quite a chilly March night, but dry underfoot. This is a demanding event, as the terrain around Bentley Copse does require map-reading and navigational skills for everyone taking part. The route was just under 10km; 41 teams started and 29 completed the event.

As winners from last year, we had a big task ahead to try and retain the shield. Sadly this was not to be but both teams did well. Leander A were 5th equal, a very good placing and Leander B, after some 'interesting' navigation, were 19th. (Leander B is now christened 'The team of the long wait'!)

Pack Pack Pack!

We started the term by training to be astronauts. Astronauts need to be physically fit and know a great deal about space, so we covered both the Fitness Challenge and the Astronomer Activity badges in our Astronaut Training School. We learnt about the solar system by turning Leander HQ into a mini planetarium. Indeed it was fortunate that we got to see some stars indoors because our star-gazing trip to Richmond Park



was so overcast that we didn't spot a single star! Even so, we still had fun playing in the dark with glow sticks. Incidentally, one of the most useful skills we learnt in the Astronomer badge is how to find the direction of North from the stars. So if you're out with your Cub on a dark night, feel free to test them!

The Cubs have also been working hard on their knots and lashings and so most have now



gained their Pioneer Activity badge. At the grand pioneering challenge some very impressive cranes were produced, and the payload of sweets may have offered some encouragement.

Leander put in a very impressive performance at the District Scooter Rally at the start of March. As reigning champions we were keen to try to repeat our success of last year. This is one event where teamwork makes all the difference. We had some very smooth pit-stops and the whole team scootered well. Leander achieved a very creditable second place, only beaten by 1st Malden Pack with just a few laps more than us.

We rounded off the term with an Easter egg hunt in Canbury Gardens, and look forward to getting outside much more next term to take advantage of the longer summer evenings.

Tim, Chris and Richard.

Fit and Healthy Beavers

Since the beginning of the year Beavers have been very busy working hard to gain a large number of badges.

The first badges they worked on were the soon-to-be-discontinued Healthy Eating Activity Badge and Fitness Challenge Award. Over a four week period they completed a number of activities, such as fruit kebabs, unhealthy food list, personal hygiene, find your pulse and wash kit contents. They also discussed as a group the values of keeping fit and healthy and listened to Cameron S from the Explorers on what it is like to be a competitive rower for a day. The final activities to be completed were to help make a healthy lunch box to take to school or to be eaten at home, and a mini circuit training session set out by Cameron.

We then moved on to the Emergency Aid Stage 1 Award, where they learnt how to deal and treat minor cuts, scratches and grazes, to know what to do

at the scene of an accident, call 999 and open an airway. We also had a little bit of fun by letting the Beavers put bandages on each other.

After half term we then switched our attention to the Creative Challenge Award. Yet again in a very short amount of time we ploughed our way through kitchen dangers, making a cup of tea, cake decorating, magnetism fun and lastly 'if I was a superhero'.

Five Beavers from Leander attended the District Science Afternoon, where they made their way round many different science bases within approx 90 mins to gain the Science Badge.

Midway through the term, the Beavers said thank you to Cameron from Leander's Explorer Scout Unit for helping them out over the past three months whilst completing his voluntary element of the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award.

At the end of last term the Colony sadly said goodbye to four Beavers (Josh P, Oliver S, Naomi B, & Edward S) and Ben, the Assistant Beaver Scout Leader, as they swam up to Cubs to continue on their Scouting experience.

I would also like to thank Ben for his continued support at Beavers over the last three years and wish him well at Cubs.

Karen

Fundraising



Please do sign up for Leander when you buy your Spring wardrobe or tools for those DIY jobs!

Our supporters have raised nearly £500 in total so far – over £50 in the last quarter to February.

www.easyfundraising.org.uk

Standing down as Group Scout Leader

Dear Friends of Leander,

It is with a heavy heart and sadness that I have decided to stand down as Leander's Group Scout Leader after nine years. It was a great honour to be asked to take on the position as Group Scout Leader from Keith Maund back in 2006, but sadly, due to an ever changing world and personal life, I have had to make a conscious decision to stand down.

I officially leave the position on 31st September 2015, so the Leander Executive and District Commissioner are now actively

looking for candidates to take over the role.

If you or anyone you know would be interested in the position, please do not hesitate to contact Nigel Duffin (Leander Chairman) or myself to discuss what is involved.

You may well ask at this point: am I leaving Leander completely? The answer is no. I will continue to run the Beavers on a Monday evening with a very much required weekly parent helper or two until Leander gains a fully appointed Beaver

Scout Leader and Assistants.

But my main aim is to be a valid member of Leander's Explorer Scout Unit again. With the assistance of Alex Newman and James Kimber, we as a team can guide and challenge the Explorers to bigger and better things as the Unit continues to grow bigger and stronger. Lastly as any Sea Scout will know, being off the water for any length of time is not nice, so I have itchy feet and feel it is time for me to get back on the water.

Karen, Group Scout Leader

Fifty years ago – Leander's 1965 Inspection

The Admiralty Inspection took place at HQ on Friday 19th March. The Inspecting Officer, Lt Cdr C J Whiffen, RN, arrived at 7.30 and was met by Skipper. He then inspected the Group on the Main Deck, speaking to most of the Scouters.

The Inspecting Officer then went up to the Chart Room and watched a gig tog-of-war, which was won by J Evans' crew, not surprising, as the other crew was one man short! Four Coypus carrying navigation lights then gave a demonstration of the rules of the road at sea for preventing a collision. The crew member gave the appropriate sound signals as the manoeuvres were carried out.

In the Workshop some of the Seniors were working on Sandling's rigging and practising wire splicing, whilst in the Half Deck, Hugh was expounding his theories on the Moon's effect on the tides. Passing on into the Ward Room, the Inspecting Officer watched this page of the Water Rat being produced and looked at back numbers of the Water Rat and Lash-up.

The four patrols were then visited. The Storks were studying buoyage and the Seagulls learning about mapping contours in the Main Deck and, in the Boat Deck, the Beavers were producing Turks Heads and the Herons having a blindfold Kim's Game, the items being of a nautical nature.

Luckily the weather was dry when the Inspecting Officer left HQ in a fibreglass gig for Steven's Ait, where the Seniors had rigged an aerial runway and were practising rope climbing. Unfortunately, the flu bug had hit the Seniors as well as the Troop and their numbers were sadly depleted. Perhaps 'Beefy' wished he'd had flu as he trailed his legs on the water on the runway! On the way back to HQ the Inspecting Officer saw the Rovers sailing the other gig, and, as he arrived back at HQ, Oxo drew up and unloaded a canoe. By this time, the Troop were doing PT in the Main Deck and, after watching for a short time, Skipper led the way to the hold to show our camping gear.

When the Inspecting Officer returned, the Group were fallen in on the Main Deck. Five Duke of Edinburgh Silver certificates, one Gold and a Queen's Scout badge were presented. He said how much he had enjoyed himself, especially on the water, where he was impressed by the pulling and sailing. He liked the spirit of the Troop and said that he had no hesitation in recommending the continuation of Admiralty recognition.

The Inspecting Officer and the Scouters met for coffee in the Ward Room, where he was presented with the latest Water Rat containing this report.

Two years of the 'Ted Springer' trophy



The 'Ted Springer' trophy is awarded to the winning under-14 crew in the Great River Race, held annually in September. Leander 2013 and 2014 crews proudly hold the trophy.