



# The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

October/November 2018

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## The Great River Race



We set off and crossed the start line in Millwall, embarking on our marathon row. It can be quite choppy at the beginning, with waves lifting the bow of the boat quite high and then sending the boat splashing back down again. Quite different to rowing in Kingston.

The Great River Race is a fantastic annual event with 330 crews competing from all corners of Britain and Europe with many in fancy dress. It's a 21.6 mile row, taking advantage of the incoming tide, through the heart of London, with fantastic views of landmarks and bridges before finishing at Ham House.

This year we had a crew of six Scouts, a crew of six Explorers, a group of Leaders and friends calling themselves the Mutineers, plus members of the Guild all representing Leander.

It's an amazing challenge for the Scouts who are all under 14 years old. Coxing them, I was very impressed by their rowing ability and their fantastic enthusiasm, spirit and

determination. One of the most memorable moments was when the whole boat sang Queen's 'Don't Stop Me Now', echoing under Battersea bridge.



It was a great feeling finally seeing Richmond Bridge and being cheered along the last mile. After four and a half hours of non-stop rowing, the finish was finally in sight.

Once we were all back and boats stored, the crews, leaders and parents had a hearty curry and well-deserved drink at Leander. A great way to finish off the day.

The whole day takes a lot of logistics and planning. Hats off to Robin for organising nearly everything, Nigel and Andrew McLauchlan for getting up in the early hours and towing the boats up to the start, to Russell for towing us from the finish back to Leander, and Alex for coxing the Explorers. And not forgetting Chris, Tim, and Ben, who, having rowed with the Mutineers, cooked and organised the curry evening.

Neil



Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

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[www.leanderseascouts.org.uk](http://www.leanderseascouts.org.uk) — Registered Charity Number 290029

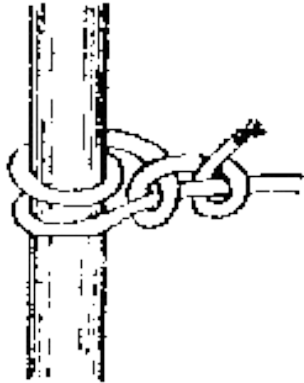


# Scouts

The resumption of our meetings after the Summer break started off with us back on the water for the last Tuesday until the daylight hours start going the other way and allow us to see where we're going again.



Communication was the theme of the next meeting, with the Scouts sending and interpreting messages by nautical code flags, semaphore, Morse code, phonetic alphabet and UHF radio. Most of the messages were translated without problem but a few seem to have got translated into either Greek or Russian by some unknown process.



The Activity badge we've chosen to complete this term is the Craft Badge and we decided to complete this by giving the Patrols the raw materials to make a knot display board similar but smaller in scale than the one on the Main Deck. Lots of pieces of paracord were stuck to the display frames ... tables ... and Scouts. The end results were a lot better than we could have expected whilst we were

# Kayaking at Hampton Pool



With winter coming, how to finish off the kayaking season with a blast? On a warm late afternoon in mid October the Cubs, Scouts and Explorers had a great time messing about in the water at Hampton Pool. That's a lot of kayaks to transport. Luckily, Alex is a genius at loading the trailer and managed to get an impressive 20 kayaks safely tied on.

A pool is an excellent place to do training, especially for the younger ones learning to capsize safely, and for the more advanced to try using a spray deck, practise support strokes, or attempting to roll. All of which are quite daunting and much colder on the Thames.

After our training, it was all fun and games, playing polo, trying to see how many kids

can get on one kayak without sinking it, or trying to stand up and paddle along.



The afternoon had a party atmosphere as it was Conor Strickland and James Wallington's birthdays. Hot chocolate, cakes and donuts finished off the session well and replaced lost calories. Many thanks to all the parents who stayed and helped. Hopefully we can do it again in the spring.

*Neil*

watching the design and manufacture processes take place. We just need to get them put up on the wall now

Neil ran another of his filming nights with the emphasis on creating 'memes', as requested by the Scouts who were on Summer Camp. Great fun was had by all, with the results ranging from truly hilarious to the truly bizarre.

The penultimate meeting before half term was a mini-night-hike in Bushy Park, which I deliberately timed to fall after the park closure due to the annual cull and rut. However, no-one had told the stags that the season was over and we had to

negotiate our way around some very noisy, amorous male deer, adding a bit of extra excitement (or fear) to the night's activity!



*Russ*

## Coxswain's Corner

Once Autumn arrives, our big event is the Great River Race, as usual the Leander entry is impressive, with five gigs taking part. The race is always a challenge with rough water, sunshine and intensive competition guaranteed, all our crews successfully completing the race.



We had another Family Boating Day in September, a great opportunity for all Leander families to take a boat out and enjoy some time on the water. Work on the HQ never seems to stop. There is always something needs doing, we have sorted out and reduced the huge amount of crockery we had in the galley store and intend to turn the Cub/Scout office into a proper store for section equipment.

What is most impressive is that hiring the hall for outside activities has really taken off, providing a regular income that is most essential. Thanks to Ruth Bennett's skillful salesmanship we now have tai chi, yoga, Pilates, martial arts and Playball bookings spread throughout the year. Section nights and activities obviously have precedence, though. It is good to see though that all the hard work that has gone into updating and improving the Headquarters is producing real benefits.

Thanks again to all parents and helpers who have given their time and efforts to supporting the Group, that really make a huge difference. The Leaders can then concentrate on running their sections.

*Coxswain*

## Beavers



Beavers returned from the summer break ready for new challenges. We had a trip to Thames Young Mariners for some bell boating before the dark evenings set in, which was great fun as ever and an introduction to paddle skills.

This term we have worked on our Emergency Aid badge, so have been learning about the importance of finding an adult to help in an emergency, calling 999 and dealing with an unconscious casualty. The Beavers enjoyed putting the adults into the recovery position!

We have set some personal challenges so there should be some delighted parents who find that beds are made and teeth cleaned without much prompting for a week or two. We must remember to have an ironed scarf, rolled nicely and smart uniform for the leader set personal challenge, as smart uniform becomes more important in Cubs and Scouts.

For our Global Issues badge, we have been focussing on home waste recycling and Fairtrade

products. After half term we learned about some endangered species and the importance of clean water on the lead up to our Christmas craft session and disco party.



Thank you to the assistant leaders, our Young Leader this term Oliver and our wonderful parents for getting enthusiastically involved in our sessions.

*Yogi (Cathy Johnson),  
Beaver Scout Leader*

*Leander Beaver Assistants:  
Baloo, Helen Farrell  
Paddington, Joanna Gaskell  
Callisto, Susan Blackburn*

