



The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

December 2023

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Busy Beavers



This Autumn term Beavers have been busy working on the My Skills Challenge badge and Emergency aid. We did fire lighting, toasted marshmallows, baked potatoes with an egg in the middle, learned to strike a match safely and sang campfire songs.



All the Beavers learned their home address including post code and a parents phone number then we talked about asking an appropriate safe adult for help. We practised dealing with cuts, bruises, reassuring a casualty, ringing 999 and put young adults into the recovery position.

Several Beavers swam up the river to Cubs, ready for more fun activities and challenge.

We fitted in a hike to Pembroke lodge with a bug hunt, bell-boating at Thames Young

Mariners and a fun and energetic Halloween Disco. Machines were invented, some useful in the home and some using blue sky thinking!

We painted pebbles, learned knots, did problem solving exercises. Parachute games usually start the Beaver sessions and games involving teeth, beans and Captains are popular. A Christmas craft session and a party with silly games end the term.

We welcomed Fozzie Bear (Steve) to our team and welcomed back Pangoro (Will) when his youngest joined Beavers. They join myself, Baloo (Helen) and Barney (Sam) as a strong and flexible team that makes running Beavers such a joy. Our Young Leader helpers doing DofE volunteering are fantastic and the Beavers love having them at meetings.

As usual our parents are involved and supportive, arriving to help with open minds, as you never quite know how it will turn out! Thank you to all.

It is a pleasure to be the start of a Scouting journey for so many Leander families and we like to hear how they are getting on at Cubs, Scouts and Explorers.

Have a wonderful Christmas break!

Yogi, Cathy Johnson

Great River Race

A recent visit to London's Watermen's Hall was very worthwhile – the Worshipful Company kindly handed over two trophies in recognition of our success in this year's Great River Race. The Alan Spong trophy, pictured here on the left was well earned by our amazing Scouts crew – the other boats in this class stood no chance.

The David Lawrence Trophy was won by Leander Mutineers (a motley crew of leaders, parents and friends of Leander). Even they couldn't believe their 'best in class' win and rumours were circulating about an error in the scoring.



On behalf of all of us at Leander, a huge well done to all of the Leander rowers in the Scouts, Explorers and Mutineers boats. The trophies are proudly displayed in the Ward Room at Leander HQ. Many thanks to all those who made this event possible.

Andrew

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

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



Scouts on land and sea

Summer Camp this year was held at Phasels Wood in Hertfordshire. The Scouts had a fun-packed activity schedule which included, archery, crate-stacking, climbing, Cresta run, air rifles, Land Zorbs, kayaking, wood cutting, backwoods cooking, hiking and finally on the last day, ice skating. Unfortunately for us, it turned out to be the wettest July in living memory but luckily most of the activities were completed between the showers.

When Troop meetings resumed after the Summer break, we took one last opportunity to get out onto the water before the clocks went back and brought darkness to our Tuesday meetings.

The following week we set the Scouts a pioneering challenge, giving them several poles of differing thickness and length and some rope. Their challenge was to make a ladder out of them but what they didn't know was that they then had to use it to climb up the outside of the building and up onto the balcony!

This year after a three year break due to Covid, Leander entered three boats into the Great River Race that runs from Greenwich to Petersham in mid-September. We had a Scout crew, Explorer crew and a Mutineers crew (leader's and parents). All three crews did very well but the Scouts were exceptional and came first in their class!



Back to Tuesday meetings and we did two weeks of split activities, with one half of the Troop air rifle shooting on the Boat Deck, whilst the other half were upstairs baking biscuits.



The following week the Scouts swapped over. This system is born of necessity due to the available space for the shooting but it seems to work quite well and adds a bit of variety to the programme.

At the end of September we took sixteen Scouts and Explorers down to the Hamble river near Southampton, for a weekend with the Discovery Sailing Project. We spent the weekend sailing around the Solent between the mainland and the Isle of Wight in two offshore sailing boats, one of twelve berths and the other of fifteen. On the Saturday evening we moored up in Lymington where the highlight for the Scouts seemed to be the children's playground on the way to Tesco's. You'd think they had been at sea for weeks!



For this term's activity badge, we decided to do the Digital Citizen, stage two badge. This gives the Scouts a better understanding of internet safety and how to spot potential danger from other users. It also aims to make them aware of the amount of time they spend online and to be careful of the various manipulation techniques advertisers use.

For our meeting closest to November 5th we thought it

would be fitting to do some fire lighting outside and gave them some marshmallows to toast on the fires they'd lit, to complete the picture.

Another split activity fortnight followed, with half the Troop climbing at White-Spider in Tolworth, whilst the remaining half were cooking recipes that the PLs had chosen at the HQ.



Navigation exercises and practice were undertaken and then put into practice the following week, with a mini-night-hike around the area of Ham House.

This term I have also resurrected Saturday afternoon air rifle shooting sessions, which have been well attended. I hope to be able to run one per month until we get back on the water, if possible.

Our final meeting of the year was a little Christmas fun, with the whole Troop ten-pin bowling at the Rotunda in Kingston.

Russ

60 years ago

Senior Scout Cruise, from *Water Rat*, November 1963 (edited!!)

We set off at 10 on Sunday 25th August in 'OXO' [Group minibus]. We were going to sail in one of the Ocean Youth Club's boats, Duet, a 22 ton gaff-rigged yawl, berthed at Cowes. We learnt that the previous week's trip had been a little rough and most of the bedding was soaking. We spent the night in bunks in one of their buildings.

The boat has a fo'c's'le up forward, a miniature galley, half taken up by the mast in the centre, the main saloon with the table and food lockers, and the after cabin. The following day was spent getting the boat ready. On Tuesday, we sailed in the Solent, so that Jo, the skipper, could see how well we did.

The trip to Cherbourg on Wednesday was a bit rough especially at first, and many of us were either sick or flat out on the deck. There is little to say about the journey across: all you could see was sea! Late evening we were entering Cherbourg Harbour.

Thursday, in true French tradition, we had croissants for breakfast. In the afternoon, we walked through the town, managed to get by with our meagre French and never went anywhere that said 'English spoken here'.

That evening we sampled some mussels. We found a sort-of French 'Millets', where we bought French fisherman-type hats. The next day we stocked up with bonded stores (duty-free goods). Sunday morning we set off for Cowes.

The trip was quite hectic and it was late by the time we entered the Solent. The tide turned against us and we had to motor into Cowes.



Movember

Fundraising news!

A huge thank you to Simon Leo (pictured here with the twins) who was brave enough to grow a moustache as part of Movember in aid of Leander Sea Scouts!

As the month progressed, Simon managed to retain a stiff upper lip despite the funny looks. The monies are still coming in, and have already funded the purchase of two new kayaks for Cubs! And rest assured, the remaining money has gone straight into Leander's shavings account. (*That's enough terrible puns, Ed*)



River Group



Kingston Council is aiming to launch a 'river steering group' to help give direction to all things related to the River Thames in the vicinity of Kingston. It aims to become the 'voice of the river' bringing together the many stakeholders which have an impact on and interest in the river.

Leander has been asked to join this group, so Robin and I plan to attend their first meeting in January. Given local concerns with the Thames Water plans at Teddington and frequent discharges of untreated sewage into the Hogsmill river, no doubt there will be a lot to discuss. We'll keep you posted.

Andrew, Chair of Trustees

A new Trustee

Leander has been in my family since we were kids (too many years back to mention!) and I have such fond memories as a young one, picking up my brother from Scout Camps looking somewhat haggard and unwashed with the biggest grin on his face, or helping my mum with the Sunday Teas on a Summer's afternoon.

With my daughter now fully hooked in to Scouts, it felt important for me to do my part to keep such a rare and special community going. Given every single person involved is a volunteer, I took on some small duties as a way of saying thanks. Before long it was suggested that I might want to become a trustee. Being a parent representative on the Board felt important to me and the Group – because fundamentally, we do all this for the kids. The past six months on the Board has absolutely flown past, and I've loved being able to play a teeny part in shaping or supporting our community.

Just last week a few of us met to carve out what events could look like next year. It was such a fruitful conversation, talking about how we can build in training programs for some key events like the Great River Race, or the Sea Scout Regatta. We also highlighted a desire to have more family socials and fun days. But of course none of this is possible without help.

In the new year we are hoping to share an overview of our event plans for the year. If you are able to help in any way, I can assure you that you will get out WAY more than you put in (or your money back!).

Please do get in touch if you have any event suggestions, or keen to get in early to offer any support. My inbox is always open!

Joanne Connolly