



The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

December 2011

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GSL Christmas Wish List!



May I pass on my heartfelt thanks to all of the section leaders, parents and Group supporters that have helped Leander over the last twelve months.

You will be very pleased to read the full report from the Inspecting Officer, on pages 2 & 3 in this Water Rat, confirming that we retained our Royal Navy recognition, following the inspection earlier in December.

Now, here are my wishes for 2012!

The Leander Cub Pack has turned a corner this year by starting to have sleepovers, and

I would like to see them take the next step by going on a weekend camp.

The Leander Troop has had many new members join this year, and, thanks to this, there has been increased interest in taking part in weekend activities, such as Night Hikes, Orienteering, Rifle Shooting, Archery and 24-7. I would like to see the Troop members take every opportunity of getting out on the water during the summer months on Saturdays.

The Leander Beaver Colony has been very busy and noisy as ever, with many badges going their way, but I would love to

see Richard with at least two other adults in uniform by his side, supporting him.

Leander has a fundraising team, but they do need your help and ideas to run events. But for this to happen please do not hesitate to get in contact them.



Leander Sea Scout Group is now open on Facebook, so, to get up-to-date information on section events and how Leander is getting on, log on to Leander Sea Scouts and join in the fun.

And lastly may I wish each and every one of you a very merry Christmas and a prosperous 2012.

Karen Loizou



Cubs prepare for 2012?

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

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RN Inspecting Officer's Report



This winter inspection was held at the Group's Headquarters in Kingston. In attendance was the County Commissioner, Ian Newbury and the District Commissioner, David Batten.

This has been the third 'dry' inspection and the group are very much hoping that their next inspection will present an opportunity to demonstrate their water activities along with their various boating skills. Every effort will be made to ensure this is the case but owing to extraneous circumstances it is not always possible.

After the Inspecting Officer was introduced to all of the sections leaders and the supporters from the executive Colours were conducted in an appropriately formal and disciplined manner. After Colours the Cubs, Scouts and leaders were fallen out to their various activities. It was very pleasing to see that the Patrol Leaders had chosen what activities should be conducted during the evening and, in most instances, took the lead for those activities. Perhaps it would have been a useful exercise for the adult leaders to have given the PLs pointers for visual aids. For example the very dry topic of rule of the road

could have been brought to life by drawing a stretch of water and then enacting situations between sail, power and rowing craft similar to those that the Scouts are likely to encounter in the summer. Other activities included pulling orders, a first aid quiz, phonetic alphabet, knots and parts of a boat/sail and for the Explorers resuscitation training.



All of the Scouts and Explorers were fully engaged in the activities with the quality of the programme reflected in the number of challenge and activity badges on display and also by the number of young people retained from Beavers all the way

to Explorers. Many of the Scouts are well on their way to achieving their Chief Scout Gold award by having attained 5 of the required 8 challenge awards and are encouraged to progress the remaining three.



The Explorer Unit is thriving and is in the unusual position of being linked directly with Leander rather than the district. Their young and enthusiastic ESL is exceptionally well qualified and he leads a group of well motivated individuals with several undertaking the D of E and Scout equivalent awards. Three of the explorers have completed Module A of the young Leaders Scheme. A number of the older Explorers have reached the age when they have moved onto university. The GSL is investigating a way to main-

tain links with these young people, probably through the network scheme thereby allowing them to remain connected with Scouting and Leander during their time at university/college and possibly more likely to return as an adult leader at some point in the future.

The entire lower half of the building is given over to a boat store and workshop which is also large enough to accommodate some evening activities. The impressive array of craft are clearly well looked after with the two wooden Home Counties clinker built Gigs lovingly maintained by a set of 'old boys' fondly referred to as the Leander Guild!! These boats compete regularly with their latest event being The Great River Race, some 21 miles from London's Docklands to Richmond. Leander also are regular participants at the annual Sea Scout Regatta and amongst many other trophies, as overall winner of the weekend they collected Cock of the River - congratulations.

Leander is fortunate to have a good number of leaders and instructors who hold both RYA and BCU qualifications, this and the location of their HQ adjacent to the water has allowed many of the Scouts and Explorers to achieve NGB qualifications in both sailing and kayaking. It is understood that although their location is not tidal, it is anything but benign with the small space being crowded with many sailing, kayaking and sculling vessels. The water-space management is always an issue



especially with young and novice Scouts.

Later in the evening the group was fallen back in so that the Cubs could demonstrate their abilities in the art of semaphore. They acquitted themselves very well and should be commended on their efforts with this difficult task.

The Executive is strong with two parents now fully involved in fundraising events. Bag packing is their next activity which has the double advantage of showing the uniformed Sea Scouts to the general public and for the Scouts to 'work for' their much needed funds. Owning their own building has allowed for some income generation. Leander is very selective in who may rent the building to prevent any unforeseen damage.

After the Cubs were dismissed the Scouts and Explorers were fallen in to witness two members being invested (one moving up to Scouts and one to Explorers) after which the formal inspection took place. The scouts and explorers were generally very well turned out and proud of their achievements, many are reasonably new to the Scout section and are looking forward to the many District, County and National activities that Leander regularly takes part in. One of the firm favourites is the night hike and summer camp. This year's camp at Longridge Activity was on an island in the Thames so is a great location for undertaking all of the traditional land Scout activities whilst honing the Sea Scout skills in-

cluding a short scull to the mainland to use the heads! School holiday dates preclude the use of HMS Bristol for the two big camp events however Leander have been a regular attended at them Soccer VI event and may well attend next year.

On completion of the inspection the ceremony of evening colours was conducted. This was carried out with familiarity and due respect.



Leander is a strong Group, all sections are thriving with approximately 100 young people on the books and quite often a waiting list. There is no intent to increase the numbers due to the water management issues. The dedicated leaders and staff offer a broad, interesting and challenging programme to their young people and all should be proud of their endeavours. Once again proved that they met the standard required for RN recognition.

Lt Cdr Cahill thoroughly enjoyed this inspection and thanks her hosts for their warm welcome and hospitality.

Karen Cahill

K A Cahill

Lieutenant Commander Royal Navy

Pack! Pack! Pack!

We have had a lively second half of term. Work on the Communication Badge progressed apace, the Personal Safety work is complete and the Creative Challenge Badge was finally finished just in time for the last meeting. Most of the Cubs created Christmas cards and entered them into MP Ed Davey's Card competition. They were all well received and three Cubs received Commendations for their efforts! Well done to Ollie Bennett, Sam Hodgson and Elliott Boss.

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

On the 10th December we organised a sleepover in the Egyptian Gallery of the British Museum. 21 Leander Cubs plus five adults joined around 200 Cubs from around southern Britain. This was an exciting adventure based around exploring the Grayson Perry exhibition. I think everybody had enormous fun and Leander were without any doubt the most mature and well behaved pack involved. Sam Turner and Cameron Hair both had their birthdays while we were entombed. It was sad that some of their families could not be there to congratulate them but fortunately their Mummies could make it!



Birthday Boy Cameron Hair won the 'Bed Hair' Competition,

taking over the title long held by Ollie Morris.

Semaphore Squad



Georgia, Max, Toby, Felix, Sam T and Cameron went along to the Royal Navy Inspection to represent the Cubs to Lieutenant Commander Cahill. They demonstrated semaphore by replicating a message previously made during Remembrance Sunday by Navy veterans. The discipline and teamwork they showed was a real credit to the Pack and Leander. There was no way Leander could fail to regain the coveted badge of recognition after that! WELL DONE THE RN30 SQUAD!!!

Pulling up & sending forth

On a Monday earlier in December, Max and I visited the Beavers and maintained tradition by hauling Izzy Cox and Joey Sparks across the river, up the bank and into Cubs. This happy occasion was balanced by the sad news that we will be losing Toby Britton and Thomas Dugdale who are happy to have been press-ganged into the Troop. We will miss them, but they have left a lasting and positive impression on the Pack. We all wish them the very best of fortunes as they progress through Leander.

Fundraising

A quick update from Fiona and Andrew on progress so far.

Firstly, thank you to all the parents who have helped us. Thanks to all of you who have sent us ideas, encouraged their sons/daughters to help out at Sainsbury's bag pack, provided items for the car boot sale, and signed up and started raising money with: easyfundraising.org.uk.

Since we started, we've raised nearly £700. This is really important as it will help us to keep the boats, kit and building in good condition. To be specific, we need to spend £8,000 repairing the roof, we also need paddles and buoyancy aids to replace the old ones, and the list goes on. It also shows Kingston Council that we can raise 'matching funds' for anything that they give us - we've recently applied for a Project Grant for £1500.

Thanks too to all the Leaders who have made this happen - for handing out the leaflets, for turning up to offer help, for reminders and emails to encourage actions.

And most of all, we say a huge thank you to the 13 Scouts (Archie, Arthur, Clare, Dominic, Edward, Eleanor, Gabriel, Joe, Iona, Isla, Matthew, Max and Tom) who gave up their Sunday afternoon to raise a staggering £471 at Sainsbury's. It is hard to describe what made this day special, and yes the money was important. But overall, it was great to see them in action, the way they engaged with people, asked permission, helped people with their shopping, smiled, cajoled and rattled the tins. An outstanding team effort!

So, if you want to help, please let one of us know. Sign up with easyfundraising.org.uk. We need volunteers to organise the Summer Teas ... so get your name down early to avoid disappointment :) And come on, you Explorers, don't be shy, we need your help here too ...

Fiona & Andrew