



The Water Rat

Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

July 2008

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National Sea Scout Regatta 2008

If anyone turned up at Leander on the first weekend in July expecting to see the Regatta in full flow, they would have been disappointed. The event moved upstream to Kingston Grammar School's base just below Hampton Court. With 16 Sea Scout Groups, 5 Sea Ranger Units and 135 events it was a very busy two days.

What can I say except WELL DONE LEANDER! Once again we swept the board, winning the u14 double dinghies, u14 gig, u14 sculling over the stern, u16 kayak, u16 sculling over the stern, u18 sculling over the stern, 2nd in u18 single dinghies, u18 gig. This meant we retained the u14 and u18 trophies.

It would be nice if other groups won some of the events, but all we do is a few weeks practice beforehand and it shows. Next up is the Great River Race in September, a really fantastic event.

Coxswain



Regatta photos by Kevin Granger - see more on the website

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

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Cubs with earth, air, fire and water



The week after the Group Family Camp we had a fire-building demonstration, learning about types of wood, how to create a fire, safety rules etc., with three leaders creating a fire.

Over the half term, Cubs collected suitable wood, which they then brought in and made a fire in their own Sixes. They then baked chocolate bananas, and cooked dough twists.

In June, as part of the Thames Watch Project, Cubs split into two groups (one towards Teddington lock and the other towards Kingston bridge) and logged the birds spotted. They saw nothing rare – just the usual ducks and swans – but they had a good time trying to spot about ten different types we were looking for. The results were submitted as part of a Thames-wide study.

A good time was had by all climbing the wall at Thames Young Mariners.

Cubs were able to have some experience kayaking, when, for two weeks, they split into two groups – one on the river in kayaks the other playing football. The first evening was lovely, and, although the weather not quite as good the second week, they all loved going on the water !

For our tracking evening in preparation for the Navigator Badge, it was pouring with rain but most of the

Cubs turned out for a great evening running about in Isabella plantation. Some Cubs had to be rescued by the leaders as the appointed driver went to the wrong car park!

The term finished with the 'Flag' Wide Game on the Richmond Park

polo field, followed by a picnic. Special mention to Arjun's mum for some fantastic biscuits!

We are very sorry to be saying goodbye to Mike Gray as a leader. It's a great shame he's going and we must thank him for all his efforts over the years helping the boys and girls in the Pack. If anyone else is interested in taking a more active role in the Pack, then please speak to Karen or me.

Nick Yelland



Liz receives her warrant at AGM



Explorers take two overall Regatta trophies

The Explorers have been out on the water for the past couple of months training for the Regatta at Hampton Court. After some training, we were all ready for the challenge of racing on the new course, further upstream from Leander.

Having previously won many of the categories, Leander managed the same again by winning the under 14s, under 16s and under 18s overall categories, as well as coming close in the under 12s.



The total surprise of the day was the under 16 kayak, which we have not won while I've been at Leander! We entered Andy C, who had not been in a kayak for three years, but to our surprise managed to win! (Is that what the Army Cadets do to people?)

Well done to Nick P, who won the Sculling over the Stern for the sixth time, but unlucky to Rhys that beached himself in the final of the under 18 Single Dinghy.

We came home with plenty of trophies, and another good year in the Regatta.

This term we have had to say our good-byes to Zoe Steele, Mattie Biddulph



and Nick Pratt, as they have or will be turning 18 by September.

James K, Explorer

Coxswain's Corner

The high spot of a Sea Scout's year is doing things in boats. At last the weather picked up and we have been able to get everybody out on the water every meeting. We have had a few problems with lack of kayaking instructors for the past couple of years, but now we are in strong position, as the leadership team has increased significantly. JB took people out earlier in the year and Andrew, who is also an instructor at Albany next door, has been taking groups out regularly. Thanks also to Peter, who has got back into scouting and is rapidly acquiring water activity skills.

Every now and again we got a bit of trouble on the water and this year we have had to be very wary of one particular rowing club from the opposite bank whose coach is extremely selfish and pugnacious – four eights

racing abreast past Leander, taking no notice of any other water users, is bad sportsmanship and dangerous. However, we try to instil into every one of our crews that keeping to the right station and being vigilant is an essential part of boat handling.

Unfortunately we had to cancel Summer Camp this year – the first time ever – as we just didn't have enough Scouts who wanted to go. School term finishes have been different this year and we do know that every family needs to book their holidays, but we have had very poor interest and attendance at District and Leander activities. We need to resolve this and will convene a special meeting in September.

On the bright side, the Cubs who came up have all done really well and are

a great bunch. The next batch have had a taster in the last few weeks, we look forward to them joining us in Autumn.

Enjoy a nice (hopefully) warm Summer break.

Coxswain

Troop Special Meeting

Scouts will start back on September 9th. The meeting will finish at 8.30pm, to be followed by a special meeting afterwards which we would ask that all parents come along to, as we do need to discuss major issues that affect the future of the Troop.

Coxswain

Busy Beavers



In true Scouting style we've had a couple of outdoor meetings this term. One was held at Fern Hill School's Sports Field where we managed to have lots of fun, get in some practice for the forthcoming District Sports Morning and discovered where our talents lie. Karen Loizou joined us at the end of a balmy evening for an open-air Investiture of eight Beavers. Was that a first for Leander?



What a team!! Leander Beavers made a dramatic debut at the District Sports Day winning race after race and graciously walking away with joint 2nd prize. They ran their socks off and their parents were pretty impressive too; not only did they wave and cheer us on but took part in the Mums' and Dads' races too. First place went to

Jess Hurl, our coach and Paul Britton took 2nd place in the Dads' Sprint.

I was proud of everyone who came along to Polyapes and thank you very much for being part of a dream team. It goes without saying that every Leander Beaver achieved the Fitness Challenge Award by the end of term - Well Done!

Another highlight for me this half term was to have our photo chosen to go on the home page of The River Thames Guide's website for a week. One sunny evening we took part in their Thames Watch Project and ventured out along the river bank to see how many river birds we could spot. We saw mallards, coots, swans with cygnets and a grebe. Where were the cormorants, herons and kingfishers? I hear you ask. Perhaps they heard us coming ...



Other activities this term have included the usual swimming session at Teddington Pool, weekly story that ties in with topical badge work, group work in Lodges and games at HQ, including old favourites such as 'Duck Duck Goose', 'Cat & Mouse' and a new one called 'Fishes in the Harbour'. (There's an animal theme here as some of the Beavers have been earning their Animal Friend Badge.)

This term we've had excellent attendance rates but have sadly had to say goodbye to four Colony stalwarts: Archie Talman, Charlie Allnutt, Harry Vincent and James Harrison. They are ready to move on and enjoyed the 'Swimming Up' to Cubs ceremony at our last meeting! They have all achieved the Chief Scout Bronze Award which they should wear with pride on their Cub Scout uniforms in September, when we will be welcoming four new Beavers into our midst.

I'd like to say a special 'Thank You!' to Karen Sykes, Daniel's Mum, who has attended most of our meetings this year and has been a great help to me since I took over as the Beaver Leader last April. I really couldn't have done it without your help!!

*Karen Rean
Beaver Scout Leader*