



The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

May 2010

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Leander at full pressure!

Since the last *Water Rat*, Leander has been very busy as per normal. As you will read in this issue, five Beavers spent a night up at Polyapes, the Cubs have taken part in the District five-a-side football competition and the Scouts have joined back together and are on the water enjoying what they do best.

I would like to thank everyone that attended this year's AGM on 10th May. I would especially like to thank and welcome five of our parents that have agreed to join Leander's Executive team to make the Group run smoother as we grow bigger.

The following parents have taken on the following roles:

- Julie Downer – Group Fundraiser
- Clare Talman – Parent Rep
- Ian Chappell – Police Great River Race Rep
- Penny D'Souza – *Canbury And Riverside Association* Rep
- Jeff Barley – Explorer Parent Rep

Over the last few weeks, you may have noticed holes appearing outside the back gates of the Headquarters. This is due to Leander not receiving enough gas pressure in the building to run everything at one time. The low pressure was found by Selwyn Lloyd, the father of our new Beaver Leader's wife Jennifer Wallington. Thanks to Richard

passing on his father-in-law's details and after many hours of caretaking by Dick Riches, a number of the Guild and Nigel Duffin, our Chairman, I am pleased to say we are back with full gas pressure.



Two weeks ago, Leander purchased three Picos from Albany Base to complete a full range of boating craft for the Troop and Unit to use during the Summer months. So, now we have as much boating equipment we can just about fit in, we have to concentrate on getting bits of our Headquarters finished.

During half term the main flagpole on the balcony is being lowered by the Guild so repairs can be done to stop water

leaking into the boat deck.

But what I would like to ask is: "Are there any parents that are able to help Leander in to complete a number of jobs within the building over the next year?" If you able to help or know someone that has a skill, please contact me so a list can be drawn up and we can get repairing.

Finally, Leander would normally run a stall at the Ham Fair, but this year we have decided to run bottle tombola at the Kingston Rotary Club Dragon Boat Event on Sunday 18th July. All help and donations are welcome to help raise funds for Leander.

Karen Loizou
Group Scout Leader

Dates

- June 12 – Beaver Scout Sports
- June 19/20 – Cub Scout Giant Sleepover
- June 27 – Cub Scout Sports
- July 3/4 – National Sea Scout & Explorer Regatta
- July 10/11 – Scout/Explorer Archery Comp
- July 18 – Bottle Tombola at Dragon Boat Event
- July 19 – Executive Committee Meeting

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

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Busy Beavers

This year has been so hectic with activities based at Leander plus those organised by the District that I am reporting on two terms at once. Two for the price of one seems to be de rigueur, so I thought I'd follow suit.



The year started with an interesting didgeridu workshop run by Sandy Lawson who has spent 16 years making, teaching and performing the unique instrument. (Leander were lucky to welcome Sandy back a few months later for a similar session at Cubs.)

At Beavers we had planned to work towards the Global Challenge Award and were able to help the victims of the Haitian earthquake by raising money. One Beaver raised £98 by holding cake sales at his school for a week and everyone else did what they could around the house for cash, reminiscent of the Bob-a-Job weeks from days gone by. Each section took part and Leander was able to donate a ShelterBox to Haiti. Hugely appreciated, I'm sure! At the end of the term we completed the award with a visit to Holly Lodge in Richmond Park.

In the Spring the Beavers also completed the Emergency Aid (Stage 1) badge. Sara Boss spent two evenings teaching us the basics of First Aid and on the second week Kate Dibley (both mothers) came to assess the Beavers putting each other into the recovery position.

Not only do we rely on the help of parents popping in to run sessions but the regular commitment of our team which has seen a few changes. We said "Goodbye" to Des Kay at Easter, our parent helper for more than a year but said "Hello" to Peg Morris, who joined us this term. The Duke of Edinburgh scheme has given many young people of secondary school age a chance to get work experience within various sections of our Scout group. Ollie was with us for a year, Fern for six months and Emily has now started for a similar length of service. When we run arts and crafts activities, such as tie dying, plate decorating or building spaghetti towers in teams, we need all hands on deck and are so grateful to have young leaders there to assist.

The District arranged the usual Science and Explore afternoons which we attended and did very well at, winning a prize for the best shelter for a small animal. (The practice with spaghetti and marshmallows clearly paid off!) We had a good number of Beavers go to the Kingston Police Station visit and the



annual St George's Day Parade, both in good weather. The conditions were also perfect for the District Sleepover which was held at Polyapes Camp Site where a handful of our Beavers enjoyed trails, games, campfire songs and popcorn! Thanks to Simon and Richard for giving up their weekend to make it happen.



The Summer term, we're concentrating on the I.T. (stage 1) badge and the Fitness Challenge. Simon Biddulph (Assistant Beaver Scout Leader) set up several computers in our HQ all linked to a printer so the Beavers could print out the healthy eating posters they'd designed at home. Richard Wallington (our new Beaver Scout Leader) was 'thrown in at the deep end' (not literally) when he had to assess the Beavers at our regular swimming sessions. Dick Garnish (former Leander Sea Scout) continues to co-ordinate these sessions which now take place at The Malden Centre. After half term we will be practising for the District Sports Day which we are looking forward to. It's not the winning it's the taking part that counts!

My last evening at Beavers will be on Monday 12th July and as this will be my last article for The Water Rat as the Beaver Scout Leader I'd like to thank everyone who has helped me over the past three and a half years. I must also let you know that there is still a vacancy within the Beavers' Leadership Team. We need an Assistant Beaver Leader, ASAP, so if you think you have what it takes (maybe a child in Beavers!) please put your head over the parapet. You don't have to stay as long as I did but I really am leaving. I've loved it and hope all the Beavers have too. Over to Richard, Simon ... and you ...

*Karen Rean
Beaver Scout Leader*

Cubs make lots of noise



In the District five-a-side, our team – Max Klein Leon, Elliott Heaton, Charlie Hallala, Scott Cockle, Art Geraghty, Samuel Turner, Sam Hodgson – played with great spirit and etiquette. We reached the quarter finals, and were knocked out by The Dolphins who had a significant height advantage. But we only lost by one goal! Art was wonderful in goal. The day was quite chilly, so we erected a tent/dayroom and made hot drinks for the parents, but also had a base for the team to operate from and keep warm(ish) in between games. Lots of fun had by all and next year we should be able to enter two teams. The Leander football kit looked extremely slysh!

Early in May, three Cubs, Christian, Scott and Jonathan, and three parents attended the Litter Pick. It was a fun and uplifting experience. The cubs play 'sword fights' with their pickers in-

between picking up litter. The Cockles' dog fell into the Thames!



Later in the month we were out on the 'Thames Watch' event looking for and counting various types of flora and fauna along the river bank. Georgia and Han-

nah were particularly good at accurately recording the results. Others were less so

A current BA pilot told us about flight and aircraft at one meeting, including a video of a flight in Concorde. In our sessions on space, the Cubs knew an amazing amount about Planetoids, Black holes, Fusion reactions and the rings of Uranus. Special mention to Iona who reeled off all the planets in the Solar System in the correct order. The next Heather Couper I think!

A world famous Didgeridoo artist came along to explain the origins of the instrument, demonstrate his art and then involve the Cubs in making rude noises with plastic drain-pipes. They all had a great time.

Bonfires and cooking are always popular with Cubs, and a meeting with dough-bread twists kept them happy for hours.

One evening we navigated to Isabella plantation in Richmond park using compasses and maps, then ran round on a Treasure hunt, looking for tree-related clues. Another visit was in the dark – a night hike, scaring away the wildlife for miles around! Apart from a couple of deer we saw nothing, but the Cubs had a great time.

Nick and Tony



Explorer Leader welcomed on board

I joined Explorers as a leader in February and on that first meeting, a dark Winter's night just before the RN Inspection, arrived to find all Explorer Scouts out on their first night of the year on the water. My immediate thought was that the Explorers are so lucky to have the freedom to get out on the water every Thursday night. My background is Guiding (in Cheshire, Greater London Kent & Wales). I've run Brownie, Guide and Senior Section Units and held various County Advisor roles including Senior Section & Queens Guide). Upon arriving in Kingston and discovering there are no local Guiding Senior Section Units, I was put in touch with Karen via the Leander website. I have been made really welcome by Leaders and Explorers alike and really enjoy my Thursday evenings as respite from a very busy day job.

Since the RN inspection every meeting bar one has seen all members on the river either rowing or kayaking with varying degrees of expertise. It has been

great to see in only a few weeks skills improve (including my own!) The topics of conversation while out on the water never fail to keep us entertained and my knowledge of TV programmes, bands and GCSE and A Level subjects has improved massively. The kayakers invariably end up in the water at some point over the course of an evening, either by accident or by all deciding to jump in at the end of the evening. It was also great to see former Explorer members return from University over the Easter holidays and call in for a catch-up.

Aside from evenings on the river, a number of members attended the St George's Day Parade and two Explorers and myself completed the RYA First Aid Course. As we are now entering exam season numbers at meetings have reduced a little, although it is good to see a several older Scouts moving up to join us.

*Lucy
Assistant Explorer Leader*

Coxswain's Corner

After a long Winter inside, the Scouts were raring to go out on the water again and this year we were able to start boating before Easter. Although the water temperature is somewhat lower than usual, because of the cold winter, the weather so far has meant a good night's boating at every meeting. With so many young Scouts in the troop now, acquainting them with the basic water activity skills is most important, but I must say, they are all extremely keen to learn.

Our instructor availability has increased recently, with Andrew Jackson, Dominic's dad now regularly working with the kayakers and Russell Constable, a Leander Venture Scout and Leader from the recent past, passing on sculling and sailing skills.

We have had a few problems with the Home Counties gigs, as some of the woodwork has succumbed to wear and tear and rot, so there are various essential bits being replaced, but they should be back in use soon. The good news though is that we have now acquired three Laser Pico sailing dinghies, which have just had their first outing in the hands of our intrepid sailors – all fine, although one boat was missing a bottom bung that made for interesting sailing – well handled Max and Cameron.

Regatta practice after half term, new crews to weld into a fearsome Leander team. We'll try and get some of the trophies back this year.

Coxswain

50 years ago

Seven Seniors took the new fibre-glass gig to the Medway the week-end before Easter, leaving HQ at 23.30, ½-hour rowing, ½-hour sleeping. At 07.00, by Ford's Dagenham, they moored to a barge, rigged the boat, then sailed, in the rain, to Greenhithe. Breakfast was cooked in the Village Hall. With the wind and tide, they averaged seven knots to Tilbury Docks. A mile or two further, Whiskey was at the helm when the tiller broke – not far off the shore, but, at that point, it did not look inviting. After struggling to row against the tide and wind they moored to a buoy, and a Police Launch offered a tow to Sheerness. They sailed up the Medway to the *Arethusa*, where they slept the night and then went home.

The next week-end, a crew of six went to the *Arethusa* on Thursday, sailing up the river on Friday morning, hoping to get to Toribridge. Just above Rochester Bridge they discovered the river was not as deep as hoped, so it was necessary to perfect a system of bouncing along the river bed on the centre plate, without tipping over. Passing the delightfully-named Snodland, Mac was at the helm when another tiller broke. A mile after passing through the first lock on the Medway, a suitable place to camp was found, near Maidstone. That evening, they went to the cinema, and left early the following morning to the *Arethusa*, where they slept Saturday night.

On Sunday, after three hours' sailing they reached the Thames. Off Sheerness the gig was taking in a lot of water over the bow on port tack – about six inches deep, and Mac and Shrimp in the bows were getting hit in the back by every wave. Reaching Greenhithe at 19.30, they were unable to stay at the hall as planned. The SM of Greenhithe Troop worked for a shipping firm, and arranged for them to go on a tanker, *Astrality*, where they were given the Officers' mess and a galley – extremely warm, a great contrast to outside.

They rowed from there at midnight, got a tow for a few miles from a Police Launch near Ford's. After sleeping in the M.L. at Lambeth, they left for Kingston, arriving at 19.30. It had been most enjoyable, although the gig was covered with a thick layer of oil and petrol.