



The Water Rat

Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

October 2007

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Visitors from Zimbabwe



Leander cold and tired around 3am, thanks to a Party Boat swimmer.

I am glad to say the 17 brave Scouts and Explorers, with their four Leaders made it back safe and sound from this year's Summer Camp, held just outside Oxford. Little did this year's camp contingent know that the River Thames would decide to burst its banks. Luckily the flooding was about five miles away. But even through bad weather everyone dug in deep and fun was had by all.

Beavers this term have been busy having visits from the local safety police officer to visiting wetlands in Barnes. They have also attended the District Beaver Sleepover and Party.

Cubs have been to Thames Young Mariners to do a spot of climbing and have been building some bivouacs. But sadly they were unable to take part in this year's District Swimming Gala.

Scouts have been on cleaning duty – pulling the boats off the water and scrubbing them down for next Spring. They have also personally been achieving activity badges. Fi-

Over the Summer holiday break, Leander housed 14 scouts from Zimbabwe for five nights, and, thanks to a number of our Unit members that had not jetted off to a far-off and hot country, we were able to get them out onto the water to have a bit fun. While they stayed at Leander's HQ they visited Kingston and even had a day trip to Thorpe Park. This was the first time for a lot of them to go to a theme park. I was very honoured to have many long evening chats with Chuck (one of the contingency leaders) on how and what life is like back home for them.

Congratulations and thank you to all that took part in this year's Great River Race. Seven Gig crews left Leander on an overcast Saturday morning, heading for a very long row from Richmond to Greenwich. Well done to the Guild for coming third in the Veteran over 60 class, and the under 16 crew (Explorers) also coming third in their class. Better luck next year to the under 14 crew (Scouts) who missed out on also coming third by only two minutes. Also many thanks to Keith and Nigel for towing back all seven Gigs accompanied by Explorers Rhys and Ollie. They arrived back at

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nally, five of the Troop attended the RN Football Competition with seven of the Explorers.

Explorers have been running around Kingston playing Monopoly and working on ideas for Leander's 100th birthday, next year.

On Tuesday 25th September, the Troop had a visit from the DC, Bob Bushell, who was honoured to present Robin (Troop Leader) with the Award for Merit, on his good service to Scouting.

Karen



Scouts write

Favourite things

My favourite thing in sea scouts is going out on the water. I learnt how to row a gig and a coypu. I really enjoy this as I like going on the river generally and I thought this summer was one of the especially fun times.

Lucy Kitchen

My favourite thing in Scouting is definitely sculling over the stern, I enjoy this immensely. I had a chance to express my love for sculling in the regatta that took place in July. In addition the great River Race was a wonderful day. Furthermore my time in Leander is nothing but enjoyable due to the amount of effort that is put into every session.

Adrian Barley

I like going out on the boats during the summer. The coypus are the easiest to rig up – only needing the rudder and the oars to be found and taken out. With the gigs you need all the boards that stop you falling through the bottom.

Sam Lear

My Weekend in Portsmouth

My weekend in Portsmouth was a brilliant experience. We left on Friday 2nd, ready for a lovely weekend sleeping on a ship called HMS Bristol, a famous battleship destroyer. The breakfast was very nice and hospitality and lunch and other meals were terrific. On the Saturday morning the tournament began. Twenty teams battled it out to see who could win the main competition or the plate. Some teams got off to a sloppy start but then started playing better, like ours.

After we had done the football and had tea we watched 'Goal 2' in our activities; it was great fun. On Sunday we were getting ready for the plate and main competitions semi-finals and penalty shoot out.

The penalty competition was very close and then we got on with the finals. The competition was gripping and nearly every semi and both finals were close, even the third place play-off which we eventually won. Everyone got a medal at the presentation. Afterwards we had lunch, said goodbye to the other groups, got on our coach to the station and caught our train back home. It had been a cool weekend.

Sam Allen

Summer Camp

During the summer camp, the weather wasn't the greatest but at times it was good. We had a great time on all the activities like: a giant swing, aerial runway, go karts and more. We made campfires, dinner and breakfasts. Sometimes we had to collect wood for the campfires and bring it back. We also played some games to make up for the loss of time. We could play badminton or have fun throwing the vortex, a sort of ball with a whistle.

Chris Granger

I enjoyed camp because it was my first one and I had to find out what to do. We had to cook three times every two days, breakfast and dinner. It was fun doing breakfast because we had to do it by ourselves. At night we had a campfire and we could cook our marshmallows. We could go and buy some sweets from the reception but we was limited because we only had £25 for a week. (!!!) Most of the camp was raining. One of the activities was the zipwire, it was so cool. We went up onto a tower, they harnessed us, I thought it would be a bit slow but when we went down the long wire, we went flying down, it was so good and there was a rubber wheel at the end to stop us.

Harry Pope

Scouts – a lot of water!

Since last July's edition of the Water Rat, quite a lot of water has flowed not only under the proverbial bridge but also through our summer camp!



We went to Youlbury in Oxfordshire, a Scout Association 'super site'. We were only a few miles away from Abingdon, which was completely flooded at the time; as the site is on high ground we escaped the floods, but the sheer amount of water that fell, particularly when we pitched the tents, turned the site into a mudbath. In the best camping tradition, a few hours spent digging real drainage ditches around all the tentage worked a treat.

Our hardy group of Scouts and Explorers were not going to let a bit of rain stop their activities – we carried on regardless. The site has invested in some really extreme high quality activities – zip wire, Jacob's ladder, giant swing, high traverse are great climbing based activities, very exposed, very exciting. Hearing the screams of two Explorers on the giant swing was a

very special moment – recovered yet, chaps?

In addition to rifle shooting, archery, pedal cars and orienteering, the heated outdoor swimming pool was very welcome. A camp fire was kept burning throughout the camp, providing that magical touch, and warmth, in the evenings.

Autumn kicked off with the Great River Race (see report), after which we started bringing the gigs in for winter. Certainly the electric pump Nigel acquired makes a great difference when bailing them out. As the nights were mild, boating in the dark is very popular, with lights of course; LED cycle lights work brilliantly, they can be seen for miles.

We have just attended the Royal Navy recognised Units' six-a-side football competition at HMS Excellent, Portsmouth. As always, a very busy weekend, a great experience for those taking part, staying on HMS Bristol, on a working RN base and keeping to ship's time. Mustering on the flight deck in full uniform at 7.15am is good start to the day – marching up to the mess for a proper full breakfast.

The event is very competitive, with FA referees and played in excellent spirit. Leander only had five players this year and, without a doubt, the team played their best, against sides with lots of subs. Without that extra player though, they just couldn't turn their best efforts into the goals they needed. However, gaining third

place in the plate competition, was a very creditable result. Extremely well played Zoe, Ella, Gemma, Joe and Sam. In addition Gemma got through to the last few players in the penalty shootout and Zoe, with her killer throw ins, got a special mention at the presentation.

As our meetings are now inside, it's time to acquire some of those skills that help make Scouting worthwhile and, of course, have some fun whilst doing it. What else? The District Scout and Explorer Swimming Gala is just after half term, followed by Remembrance Sunday and the District Air Rifle competition.

Coxswain

Great River Race

As always seems to happen, the event often takes place in early September, just as the schools are going back, but the Scout crew managed to get some practice in before the day. With some quite small people in the crew, it was tough for them this year; a bit of muscle does help get the boat down to Greenwich.

For the last few miles Leander was neck and neck with 14th Streatham Sea Scouts' boat, they just finished a length ahead. The weather was fine although a headwind against us from Kew to Putney was hard work – everyone who finishes the race really knows when they have done it. Well done Zoe, Gemma, Joe, Adrian, Sam and Chris.



Busy Beavers

The autumn term started early for five Beavers who attended an experimental Sleepover at Berrylands Scout HQ. Thirty Beavers from the Royal Kingston District spent 24 hours together on September 8th & 9th and this is what the Leander Beavers thought of it:

Clare: I had fun! I liked it when we had yummy food. And we played lots of fun games! You were called a number. And it was great fun in the dark when we had to find a box and in the box was a raffle ticket. I got a flashing yo-yo. We sang some silly songs with actions. But it was hard to go to sleep because some boys would not be quiet.



Kirsty: I had a great time. The activities were good; I thought the kite making was the best.

Arjun: I thought the beaver sleepover was fun. I especially liked the food. It was really nice. I liked making the Bindeez the best. I think I made some new friends too.

Toby: It was fun because it had a big back garden. We had to hang our uniform up, wait in a queue to wash up until our plates were shining and sleep on the floor. We played zombies and had jelly and ice cream every day!

Archie: We arrived at 11.00 on Saturday morning and my friend and I went outside to kick a football around. Others arrived and, when we had got things sorted out and our beds laid out, we made a name badge for ourselves. We then went outside and played parachute games. After lunch we washed up (I did not enjoy that!) and played more games and made cakes. After tea we washed up again! The best thing was after tea when it started to get dark. Then we went outside with our torches to look for small boxes with a ticket inside. We

all won a prize! We sang some really funny songs before bed. I really liked going to bed in a big room with lots of people. We went to sleep quite late and then I was woken the next morning by a torch in my eyes! On Sunday morning we had fun making kites and when our mums came we all looked for corks. It was a great time and I'd really like to do it again one day.

Back at Leander HQ we've been incredibly lucky to have two meetings with outside speakers who have taught us about Road Safety and Stranger Danger. The Beavers were especially taken by the array of hats the Police brought in for them to try on!



As part of the Outdoor Challenge Award we enjoyed a trip to the London Wetland Centre in Barnes for pond dipping, and had lots of fun both indoor and out. We were joined by ten siblings (many of whom are Leander Cubs) and we have a second trip booked for Kew Gardens at Christmas. Hope the Cub Pack can join us!

Our six weekly swimming sessions at Teddington Pool have continued to be popular, not only for the splash around in the training pool but for the challenge of badge work with Dick Garnish's guidance in the main pool. The Swimming Badges are earned when Beavers meet all requirements of each stage (stages 1 & 2 are within our sights.)

We recently had an Investiture Ceremony and welcomed four new Beavers into the Group, which brings our total membership up to 20. Beavers take part in activities either as a Colony (that's everyone together) or in Lodges (smaller groups of approximately five

Beavers) to encourage concentration on specific tasks whilst having the opportunity to get to know each other better.



As we approach the end of the Centenary of Scouting the District Beaver Party catered for Beavers from all 17 Scout Groups in Kingston. There were some 250 Beavers in one hall with nine from Leander – can you imagine the noise! The entertainer was very entertaining and everyone had lots of fun. Nine Leander Beavers made it onto the stage. At the end Toby was presented a certificate for growing a sunflower (a very small one) by Bart Ricketts, Deputy Mayor of Kingston.

Well Done Everyone!

Karen Rean



Explorers Swing!

Summer Camp

At camp this Summer it rained a lot. There were lots of activities for us to do, including an aerial runway, G3 Swing, which was very high but great fun. The rain and activities were broken up by Andy doing certain stunts and Little Chris trying to fall over everywhere. Despite the bad weather we all had a great time and were sad to leave at the end. Then it rained some more.

Huw & James



RN Football

The first weekend of October, seven members of the Unit went to Portsmouth to stay on HMS Bristol situated on HMS Excellent for the annual RN six-a-side football competition. Despite losing one, drawing six and only winning one match, it was a weekend enjoyed by ALL.

By Ben

Jamboree 2007

Four Leander Unit members attended this year's world Jamboree held in Essex.

Rhys, Mattie and I were in Nelson Unit, and Zoë was the only one from Leander was in Victory. It was a long-

awaited camp and everyone that was attending was in very high spirits. I would recommend to any member of Leander, that, if they get the chance to attend the next Jamboree in Sweden in four years' time, to take the Scout chance of a lifetime.

Alistair

Bad weather forecast – Cubs bivouac on Main Deck!



The World Scout Jamboree



For me, the World Scout Jamboree was an amazing experience. It's hard to imagine 40,000 Scouts from all over the world in one place, but that was the set up of Hylands Park, Essex from the 26th July – 8th August this Summer.

My Unit of 36 young people and four leaders were joined on Beach sub-camp (the best one!) by 1960 other people; six other groups from the UK, three American groups, Italians, Germans, Libyans, Greeks, Moroccans and Chileans to name only a few.

Everyone shared their cultures in different ways, but the main way was through sports, food and music. The Victory Unit boys taught the Americans rugby, and the Japanese started

a sumo wrestling competition; we had an international food afternoon where each group set up stalls at their site and everyone went around trying it, and many of us were lucky enough to join in with a big song and dance with the Libyans playing their trumpets and drums. The dancing with the Libyans was particularly eye opening, as I could see the fun they were having performing to their own music and entertaining others simply with their own voices and a few instruments.

The activity areas that were set up around the site were themed, ranging from Trash, where we had to make music from bins and bottles, to Teraville where there were stations from different countries set up at which you could do different activities. I made

an Indonesian puppet out of buffalo leather, and took part in a cross-country skiing race, and won!

I also particularly enjoyed going off site to Splash, where I was able to show off my sea-scouting skills and row in stroke in an 8-man gig from New Zealand, in a group of which no other person was English. Other activities included sailing, kayaking and bell-boating, and, although we were out on the water on the only rainy day of the Jamboree, I know everyone had fun!

To describe the Jamboree on solely a page has proved difficult, as there are far too many great moments to describe! Although I must highlight one aspect I found incredible. Within the 40,000 people there were different races, religions, languages, and cultures, but everyone was still able to communicate in some way even if it was only through body language.

Everyone was able to enjoy each other's company and have fun together, and this common grounding that every single Scout at the Jamboree could enjoy is what I think truly made the Jamboree for me. It really did highlight the Jamboree's motto: One World, One Promise.

Zoë

