



The Water Rat

Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

October 2004

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Skipper's Scrawl

As a change from the last edition, I only have good news to report. Firstly a warm welcome to our new Cub leaders, Sarah and Rob Barnard, Caro and Paul Kitching, and Debbie Pratt. Obviously it will take a little time for the new team to settle in, but there is nothing like jumping in at the deep end to get things going. We are fast getting round to having the Cub programme back on course and have again been able to reinstate swimming in the programme. Our thanks also to John Dadds who is helping out at meetings with a guiding hand whilst we get underway again. After half term, we should be able to take in a few more Cubs off the waiting list and bring the section up to full strength.

It seems the trophy cupboard is again filling up. Once again, under Ian's skilled coxing, the Scouts came first in their class in the Great River Race from Richmond to Greenwich. A great achievement, since they bettered the next boat in their class by a good six minutes. I was also pleased that they

were able to use the wooden gig 'Alert', which had just been brought back from the boat yard at Wroxham after an extensive refit. Thanks also to Gordon Biden for towing the boat there and back in time for the race.

The race was, as usual, a great event and we had nine boats setting off from Leander at about 10am. We also had a Dutch lifeboat and crew - the Dutch Champions - leaving with us, since they had been staying the weekend at our HQ. As usual we were grateful to London United Buses for the double decker getting the teams back and to the Rotary club for laying on the usual fish and chip supper at HQ. Myself - I had a relatively easy time, since I went down in the support boat with Nigel to disembark crews at the finish and help the tow back with Neil and Ray in their boats and Les (who we thought should join the tow team as an introduction to being Group Secretary) under the direction of tow master Roger Jones. Regrettably, neither the tides nor Richmond lock keeper were in our favour since, after putting the

boats back on the moorings, we did not get home until 4am!

The refit on 'Alert' proved expensive at £4700, since the boat had to have a new keel, hog and part transom. This meant splitting the boat in half and then rejoining and inserting new ribs throughout. Hopefully, however, we can now look forward to another 60 years of use, since it is an ideal boat for the younger Scouts to row. We are grateful to the RN fund for a grant to help towards this cost, however it has still depleted our reserves to the extent that our treasurer George is having palpitations! A fund-raising exercise will therefore be necessary to build up the coffers again.

Finally, well done to the Explorers on their win at the RN Soccer Sixes competition at Portsmouth and also to the Scout team who did well. Apart from the competition, it is a great experience to be able to stay on a destroyer and, hopefully in the coming months, we will be able to take advantage of more of the Navy's facilities when

we organise a power boat course through the Thames Sea Scout Forum.

Keith



The Scout crew, coxed by Ian, in the Great River Race

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Coxswain's Corner

As usual, Autumn brings a number of changes to the Troop: Zoe Steel, Matty Biddulph and Nick Pratt have moved up to Explorers – we are still missing their distinct personalities, but we have had an influx from Cubs this term. Welcome to Becky Pratt, Viviana Gardener, Lucy Peto and William Beedham.

This is the busiest part of the Scouting year, with lots of District and County activities to take part in before Christmas (see the list below) and we have been very busy sorting out the many badges that are due. I'm sure there has been quite a lot of sewing activity over half term.

Although we are not due an RN Inspection yet, we have a lot of work to do to bring the Troop up to the standard that is expected. Sea Scouts can look very smart when in uniform and personal turnout is good, but they look awfully scruffy when uniform and appearance is sloppy.



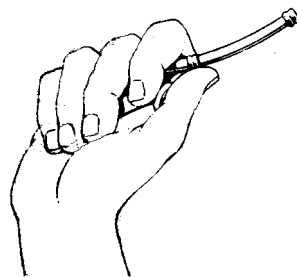
Coxswain keeping an eye on preparations for the Great River Race

We will be having regular uniform inspections, call practice for PLs and some very interesting and different evenings about the Royal Navy.

One of the most enjoyable parts of Scouting is the gaining of badges that Scouts can choose to do – badges for hobbies, skills, sports and many other activities. We did expect a badge book to be available, but now all the requirements have been downloaded from Scoutbase and everyone will be given a copy – no excuses now. Let's get those badges rolling in.

We have an event at Polyapes District Camp site planned later in November – an opportunity for camping overnight, navigation, night hike practice and a camp fire – it's only a few miles from Kingston and will be a great weekend.

Coxswain



Scout Events

- 12th November – District Scout and Explorer Scout Swimming Gala at Pools on the Park, Richmond
- 20th/21st November – Navigation & Night Hike Camp at Polyapes District Camp Site
- 28th November – County Orienteering Competition in Banstead Woods
- 28th November – District Air Rifle Competition at 1st Malden HQ
- 4th December – County Swimming Gala at Trinity School, Shirley
- 8th December – District Chess Competition at 1st Hook HQ
- 14th December – Christmas Party/Event

RN Football Competition

On the first weekend of October the Scouts entered a team into the Royal Navy Soccer Sixes Tournament held at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth. The main focus of the weekend was obviously football, but the chance to spend a couple of nights on a decommissioned Navy destroyer (HMS Bristol) was also a great experience – if not for the Scouts, it certainly was for a certain leader who had not been before.

Unfortunately, because of age restrictions, we only had five available players for the competition. In true Leander spirit, this was not going to stand in our way! The leaders took advantage of the Bosman ruling to bring in an extra player on a free transfer from the Durrington troop, bringing our squad to full strength.

The terrible weather on Saturday was relentless but so too was the determination of the Scouts, at times displaying some very commendable teamwork and rather fancy footwork. They qualified for the second round of the main tournament in the afternoon but unfortunately fatigue got the better of them and they didn't manage to qualify for the semi-finals.

Sunday morning was spent watching the final and the penalty shoot-out competition, as well as showing support for the eventual champions in the Explorer competition – Leander (again!). Following the presentation of trophies and medals it was time for the train journey home; a far more subdued affair than on the way down on Friday night.

Well done to Chris, Rhys, Ben, Andrew and Ollie (and Baz, our super-sub from Durrington).



Dave

A creative time ahead for Beavers



Three new Beavers invested by the Group Scout Leader

This Autumn the Beavers have been working on their Outdoor Challenge. To practise their Scoutcraft, they found out about the Country Code and, while we still had daylight at the meetings, followed a flour trail. Two of the Explorers, Aidan and Sam, came along to explain what you'd need to take to a camp and how to pack it all into a rucksack – this should be useful when the boys and girls go hiking and camping in the Cubs and Scouts. For cookery skills, they have decorated biscuits.

We go swimming twice a term and all the Beavers, except those joining this term have gained their Stage 1 swimming award.

For the next couple of months, we will be working on the Creative Activity badge, which will involve putting on an entertainment: telling jokes, reading poems, or performing music. Also, in November, the Beavers will be making some 'Firework Art', so there could be some budding Turner Prize winners at Leander.

Before Christmas, we are planning a night walk and also a 'virtual camping' evening, complete with virtual campfire, and will round off the term, as usual, with a Christmas party.

Mandy

Your Group needs you!

Parents – don't forget – we rely on you to keep the HQ 'ship-shape'!



Parents' working parties on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month are

for regular cleaning and maintenance of the HQ, allowing our leaders to get on with planning and running programmes.

Leander couldn't run effectively without parents' helping this way – it's one of the ways you can support the voluntary work of the leaders.

This is a NEW ROTA, starting in November, in which we've tried to group families so that there is a spread of families from all sections of Leander, so that there should always be a couple of 'long-standing' parents who will 'know the ropes'.

Please would the *first named on the list arrange to collect a key from Mike Freeman (020 8549 8634).

November 14 – *Hazard, Rhodes, Exworthy, Burley, McDonagh, Goodwin

November 28 – *Cockle, Harris, D'Souza, Geraghty, Lear, Gaffney Harrison

December 12 – *King, McGuinness, Foster, Sibley, Pope

January 9 – *Barley, Wingrove, Gardener, Ward, Sankey

January 23 – *Freeman, Chapman, Beedham, Hearn, Bate

February 6 – (moved to avoid ½term) *Woods, Steele, Peto, Pratelli, Corlett

February 27 – *Pearn, Biddulph, Goodall, Hayes, Waller

March 13 – *Whitfield, Smith, Bowers-Clarke, Troullides, Lawley-Gibbs

April 10 – *Harrison, MacAllister, Fox, Williams, Webb

April 24 – *Aviram, Walters, Howe, Kersey, Davies

The Mutineers

The mutineers have enjoyed another season on the water. With many people's available time restricted by work and family requirements, we didn't get out as much this year. River Race practice was much reduced, reflected in the crew's time in the race. The weather is now restricting the pulling activities, but we will soldier on through the winter on the boat deck and get another gig refurbished for next season.

Remembrance Day

Each year Leander attends the annual Remembrance Day Ceremony at the War Memorial in Kingston, which this year is on Sunday 14th November. As usual, we will meet at 1st Malden HQ, The Bittoms at 9.50am. Smart uniform, please.

We expect to see all Explorers, PLs & APLs on parade, please. Leander always make a good show each year – let's keep it this way.

Start the Autumn in TWO!

After a very low and poor turnout of Explorers at this year's Summer Camp – only three – and only being able to find five Explorers to take part in this year's Great River Race, I felt I needed a super sub. Yes, he did come – in the form of Tom C. Many thanks to him on jumping into the gig at Ham House an hour before the race actually started ... and had not been in a gig for more than a year. Also thanks to Dave for taking Chief and the Explorers down to Greenwich for me, so that I was able to go on holiday. Well done to the Explorers on beating the Troop Gig this year but unlucky on just being beaten by the Mutineers.

Whilst I was away, Matt took the seven members of the Portsmouth Football team to Goals in New Malden and I believe all had an hour of fun and football.

On my return we started to crack on with some serious nautical training, which consisted of learning about the history of the six Leander warships, ensigns and flags from the home nations.

In between that, the Unit had a weekend down at Portsmouth and stayed on HMS Bristol, to take part in this year's RN six-a-side football competition. We left Surbiton Station on the Friday, and could we have gone away without problems? NO! But once we got onto the train station and changed a few minor details, we were on our way. On the Saturday morning at 6.15am all of the ship's company was

up, but not awake, and soon to be marching off to breakfast and then to play eight hours of football. Once they had finished all of their games, they went back to the ship and got ready for the evening entertainment and dinner. At 10.30pm it was lights out and time to get a good night's sleep because the Leander ESU had a semi-final meeting with Walthamstow.

Once up and the ship clean and stowed away, the Unit went up to the pitches to watch Nathan crash out of the Penalty Competition, but then it came to the semi of the day. The game was not won in time, so it went to three man penalties.

Believe me I hate them, but once Nathan saved the third penalty from the opposition and Sam scored, I have never felt so proud and relieved. Yes, that means they were in to the final for a second year on a trot, but this year they would have to face Hamble. Same again happened. They could not win the game in time, so it went to a man-on-man penalty shoot out. Both teams scored their first penalty, but then – yes – a second game in a row, second penalty of the second final in a row, Nath saved. But to put the icing on the cake, he then scored the winner. This time I felt like I was having a heart attack and nearly did cry. Once all of the presentations had taken place and we had said a farewell to Lt Cdr Rod Williams at the train station, we came home for the SECOND year on the trot with the HMS Gloucester Cup.

Since then they have come back down to earth and are now carrying on with their nautical skills training.

Four of them have achieved their Stage 5 Swimmers Badge, and they also have a very busy November, consisting of a County Night Hike, a District Swimming Gala and helping the Troop with their 24 hour night exercise up at Polyapes.

Kaz

Dates for your Diary

- November 12 – District Swimming Gala
- November 14 – HQ working party:
*Hazard, Rhodes, Exworthy, Burley, McDonagh, Goodwin
- November 14 – Remembrance Day Ceremony
- November 15 – Executive meeting, 8pm
- November 28 – HQ working party:
*Cockle, Harris, D'Souza, Geraghty, Lear, Gaffney Harrison
- November 28 – District Air Rifle Competition
- November 28 – County Orienteering Competition
- December 4 – County Swimming Gala
- December 8 – District Chess Competition
- December 12 – HQ working party:
*King, McGuinness, Foster, Sibley, Pope
- January 9 – HQ working party:
*Barley, Wingrove, Gardener, Ward, Sankey



The Leandettes (or is it Leanderettes?) enjoying the Great River Race