



The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

October 2012

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Welcome Back

May I take this chance to welcome back all of Leander's young members and leadership team to what looks like a very busy year ahead. Also welcome to all of our new members and their families to an ever-growing Leander (Kingston) Sea Scouts.

This term started off with the annual pulling challenge, The Great River Race for four crews from Leander and one crew from the Kingston Rotary Club. I would like to congratulate The Leander Mutineer Crew which consists of Leaders, fathers and supporters of the Group, on winning the Scout Associated Class in this year's race.

Many changes happened to our HQ over the summer break, and after the countless amounts of hours spent filling forms I send a heartfelt thank you to Fiona Firth and Andrew Jackson for helping us secure a National Lottery grant to have all of our skylights replaced. So I am pleased to confirm Leander is now water-tight and safe again. Also with a generous donation to Leander, we have now been able to install hot water into the toilets.

I am sad to announce that Leander has now said goodbye to Hermes and Hercules, two of our oldest Home County Gigs. One has gone to 14th Richmond Boating Centre and the other is going to become the mould for the New Home Counties Gig

which is being built downstream in Richmond upon Thames by Mark Edwards. Mark Edwards is a very well-renowned boat builder, with the royal barge *Gloriana* – a tribute to Queen Elizabeth II – being his most recent privately commissioned piece, so I hope you will agree with me the legacy of the Home County Scout Craft Gig is in safe hands.

At the end of this term after approx 16 years, Robin Burr (Coxswain) will be standing down from his duties as Leander Scout Leader. He will not be leaving Leander, as I am happy to advise he has accepted the role of Assistant Group Scout Leader, where he will be assisting me on the running duties of the Group and taking on the main role of looking after the boating equipment. I hope all of you, past and present, will join me in thanking Robin for the wonderful job he has done for the Troop over the many years.

Lastly, from January 2013 I would like to introduce the Leader SASU (Scout Active Support Unit). Scout Active Support allows people to give their time to Scouting on a flexible basis. People can still be involved in Scouting without the full-time commitment of being a leader. You will need to be CRB checked (if you are not already) then just help when you can. Being a member of the SASU could

involve:

- Tent Pitching
- Cooking
- Art & Crafts
- Van Driving
- Boating
- First Aid
- Boat Maintenance
- Great River Race Crew

So if you would like to join the Leander Scout Active Support Unit, why not give me a call (leanderssgsl@gmail.com or 07909 968 382) and join in the fun.

Karen
(Group Scout Leader)

Great River Race

Once again Leander put in the usual large entry to the race – Scouts, Explorers, Guild, Mutineers and Rotary gigs took part. With wind against the tide it was a tough pull up to Tower Bridge, but the weather was bright and sunny, just right. The Scouts were 2nd in their class, a really hard race for them and full credit for their efforts, whilst the Mutineers won the Sea Scout affiliated class (hoorah!). A brilliant day, we never let the stroke drop and really enjoyed probably the best River Race we have competed in.

Robin

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

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Explorers enjoy their food!

In the Great River Race, the Explorer crew completed the course from Greenwich to Richmond in a time of 3 hours 54 minutes. In their under-18 class, this was a great achievement, because five of the six crew were aged only 14. So this is a good sign for future years.

During the Autumn, they have continued to be on the water, rowing, most Thursdays.

They have also found time to practise lighting and maintaining Tilley lamps, and to do some knotting and lashing – traditional stuff! Some of the Unit are helping out with the busy and boisterous Beavers and Cubs.

A programme planning evening came up with ideas for the Winter, most of which seem to involve food – firelighting, a barbecue, cooking, making a gingerbread house (as in the Great British Bake Off). This is probably the sort of aspirational thing they have in mind.



It's not clear whether this activity was a preparation for baking, involving custard, flour and porridge, or whether it was some Leander version of Halloween apple-bobbing, but without the apples and without the water. It does involve food, though!



Scouts at the Regatta in July

Cub Swimming Gala



The Royal Kingston District Cub Swimming Gala took place on Saturday evening, October 13th, at the Rainbow Centre in Epsom. Leander entered a small squad of five keen swimmers who, throughout the evening, showed some spirited and valiant individual and team performances.

The Cubs were split into under and over 9¼ years, with Jonathan Allan and Eleanor Pullen swimming in the younger age group, and Max Biddulph, Cameron Hair and Ralph Talman taking part in the older group.

The general standard of competition was very high, with some very strong swimmers in each of the eleven teams. Leander knew that everybody really had to do their best, and this they did, fighting determinedly in every race to make it through the heats to the finals in every category.

The finals were going to be challenging, and so it proved. However again the whole Leander squad really put up a

strong fight in every single race and should be very proud of all their performances as in many of the races there was little to separate the positions.

The races to mention in particular were Jonathan Allan's imperious victory in the under-9¼ backstroke final, in which he took a commanding lead and never let it go. Then, later in the Freestyle, I must make mention of a great team performance with Cameron, Max, Ralph and Eleanor fighting all the way to the finish line only to be beaten into 2nd place in the final metres of the race, by a very strong swimmer from 1st Tolworth. All very thrilling and enjoyable.

Leander finished joint 4th overall in the competition, which should make them very proud. They were a small squad in comparison to others, but their grit and desire to do well for the team shone through at all times. Well Done!

Clare Talman

Coxswain's Corner

This Autumn has seen the Troop reach 36+ in numbers, the largest we have been for some years, necessitating the startup of a new patrol, Puffins. With lots of enthusiastic young people, getting organised is very important and that means the PLs working much more closely with the Leaders. I am sure they will rise to the challenge.



Since the Summer holidays, the main event has been the Great River Race (see separate item) but we have also been involved in a variety of activities that haven't been in the programme for a while. Two meetings of intense pioneering activity saw the patrols learning the knots and lashings required and then they constructed a large catapault. Russell organised a street challenge around the rural parts of Ham, producing such a range of 'interesting' navigational errors that we then made sure at the next meeting everyone could understand and read map references!

At the last meeting before half term, the Troop wrote down their opinion of Leander (nothing like a bit of consumer focus) and then thoroughly enjoyed one of Leander's very boisterous traditional games - 'over the wall'. This is a special treat only indulged in once or twice a year - very physical but always asked for.



As most of you will know, this will be my last Troop report, as I am handing over to Aidan, Russell and Jim. After over 15 years running the Troop it's time for a change and some fresh ideas. I will be still be around though at odd meetings, looking after the boats and helping to run the Group as Assistant Group Scout Leader.

Thanks for all the support and long may the Troop flourish.

Coxswain

Why I like Leander (from our Scout reporters)

I like going out on the river and kayaking.

I really enjoy being part of Leander and I think that it is everything good and one of the best parts of Leander was Scout camp!!

We get to go out on the water and go to the park and play capture the flag and do badge work on outdoor activities.

I like the leaders because they are all encouraging and I enjoy being around them. I like Leander because they lead the dance and it was epic. I find Leander inspiring and fun.

I like the look at Leander

I like Leander because of the Summer camp and mini-Olympics since it uses really fun and we did loads of exciting activities. I also enjoy the racing in Summer.

I like Leander because the leaders are great.

I enjoy the district nighttimes, the reports and heading in the Summer. Leander is great.

Summer camp I really enjoy the boating in the summer, and the summer camp is great.

activities are also great.

new experiences.

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