



# The Water Rat

Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

December 2008



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## Ship-shape and Bristol Fashion

Many congratulations to all who attended and helped with this year's Royal Naval Inspection on Wednesday 26th November. I am happy to confirm that Leander have retained RN recognition status for another eighteen months (with a few stipulations); all in all the whole evening was a great success.

This time not only did we have the Inspecting Officer, Lt. Cmdr David Griffiths, along with District and County representatives, we were also honoured to have the Mayor of Kingston, Councillor David Berry.

The evening events this year were run by our very nervous Explorer Unit with section leaders assisting them. The Inspecting Officer was very impressed that the Unit had taken up on the offer to run the evening, and I got the impression he was a little shocked by this. Once again, well done to the Unit and the Troop on a great evening. Also a very big thanks you to our Cub Pack sixers and seconders on accepting the invitation to come along and take part and to gain some basic nautical skills knowledge.

This term has been a very visible one for Leander. The Beavers with a few Cubs visited the Poppy Factory in Richmond and had a small slot on CBBC's Newsround. The Scouts along with the Explorers

attended the annual Remembrance Parade in Kingston, and finally a number of Cubs, Scouts, Explorers, Leaders and even parents helped to raise some money for Leander at the Surrey Basin Sainsbury's, doing a bit of Bag Packing.

I am pleased to finally announce the winner of the Leander Centennial T-shirt competition that took place by mistake twelve months ago. Congratulations go to Lucy Kitchen. On a sadder note the design will not be going on to a T-shirt, but will be available from March as a badge to be worn from April 2009 by all active group members and leaders on their

Scout uniforms for one year only (so please do not glue them on).

But I am happy to say that we are getting, for this year only, the Leander 100 T-shirt. They will hopefully be in stock by mid-January. So if you would like to purchase this one off T-shirt, please fill in an order form ASAP, so we can order your son or daughter's T-shirt in the correct size.

This now leads me into wishing everyone a **very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.**

Karen



Karen, with the Lt. Cmdr David Griffiths, at the Royal Navy Inspection

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## Busy Beavers

Towards the end of October, twenty five Beavers and Cubs from Leander visited the Royal British Legion Poppy Factory in Richmond.

38 million Remembrance poppies are produced for Remembrance Sunday each year, with a team of fifty people – most of them disabled and ex-Service connected – working all year round.

The first official Legion Poppy Day was held in the UK on 11 November 1921, inspired by the poem *In Flanders' Fields* written by John McCrae. Since then the Poppy Appeal has been a key annual event in the nation's calendar.

The Beavers and Cubs spent an interesting morning learning about Remembrance Sunday, the history

of the poppy appeal, touring the factory and meeting staff. Not only did they get an opportunity to make some poppies and wreaths for 2009, but the visit was made all the more exciting by CBBC's Newsround coming along to report on the experience, with producer Charlie and presenter Ore. They appeared on CBBC TV the following day.

Karen Rean  
Simon Biddulph







The photo of Cubs at the swimming gala shows Thomas Washington (who won the race), Dylan Brayford, Claire Jackson, Rhodri Curtis & Kirsty Frame



Cubs had an interesting presentation on 'Stranger danger' from the local Community Support Officers. Some Cubs got to turn on the blue-lights of the patrol-car, the others got to handle hand-cuffs and use police truncheons!



When the Cubs had a session looking at building techniques and materials, they were amazed at the strength of one piece of rolled-up paper. All kinds of impressive towers were made from rolled-up sheets turned into tubes.



## State Opening of Parliament

On Wednesday the 3rd of December, the Queen officially started the parliamentary year in a ceremony called the State Opening of Parliament. This is like the new year's celebration for British politics! – one of the big set piece events of the year for the Establishment.

The actual ceremony is quite simple: the Royal entourage arrives in true monarch style with two full units of Household Cavalry. The Queen then dons her full ceremonial outfit including King George V crown and a four foot train; she then sends Black Rod (the name is for both his position and his badge of office – the black rod), who is, to all intents and purposes, the Queen.

In this event he takes Her place to summon the 'commoners' from the House of Commons to hear the speech in the House of Lords.

This is tradition, as not since 1606 has a Monarch set foot inside the House of

Commons. This, including slamming the door in Black Rod's face, is to show that the Monarchy has no executive power over the elected house. The Queen would even need permission to go into your house; she has no special power or right to do so.

Once the Commoners have gathered, the Queen delivers Her speech (which is actually the PM's speech – she just says what she is told to say), which sets out what the Government will do over the next Parliamentary year.

Enough of the Politics lesson...

Every year, the Scouts are asked to get involved, which this year I was selected to do, this now longish standing tradition. For this, twenty (perhaps foolish), Scouts brave the December freeze to act as marshals and open doors for visitors such as foreign ambassadors, dignitaries and other important people. In general, people with very expensive cars; yet surprisingly, a fair few arrived in cabs!

It is then back inside for some much needed warmth, then straight back out to stand stock still for half an hour forming a guard of honour for the arrival of the Queen and Her procession.

As soon as that's over, the Scouts get packed off all over Westminster Palace to hold signs to show the guests where their party is, and even then some needed to be told as well! With barely a moment's pause, it's back outside to try and keep some kind of order as all the cars turn up all at once and no-one knows what is going on and everyone is trying to find the right car, all of which ends in gridlock, going nowhere and the Scouts calling it a day and wandering off to MacDonald's for a much needed burger.

Ali E  
Leander Explorer

## RN Inspection – November 2008

Some extracts from the report of the Inspecting Officer:

Colours, led by the Explorers, was conducted in a full, appropriate and disciplined manner, with an excellent standard of piping.

The Cubs ... were engaged in a variety of activities based on getting afloat, including knots and safety equipment. The Scout bases ... included basic nautical skills, map and compass, parts of a boat and first aid.

All were most smartly presented for [formal] inspection and are commended for their efforts.

