



The Water Rat



The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

December 2013

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Coxswain's Corner

What sort of year has 2014 been for Leander? The Group has never been more popular, with every section running at capacity. This asks a lot from all the Leaders, who week in, week out, put on a huge range of different and exciting activities. It takes time and planning to provide programmes that keep our young people fully engaged, so many thanks to all those who run the sections.

keeping the Thames navigable and in good condition. (This is something we all tend to take for granted as the River is probably in the best state it has been for a very long time.)

Hope you all have a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Coxswain, AGSL



A huge thank you to Simon Bidulph who has built the Cub section into a really strong part of the Group and who has now handed the running over to Tim Pullen.

As usual now, we watch the state of the river and hope that we can start boating around Easter, as we are due our RN Inspection soon and it would be nice to have an on-the-water inspection (the last three have been in Winter).

We will be reorganising the racking on the Boat Deck to make storage a bit more flexible, with some additional racking outside the building, we just need some drier weather to get this done.

If you take a walk up to Teddington Lock, have a look at the huge amount of new timber stacked there which will be used to refurbish the large lock. This is all part of the Environment Agency's year round commitment to

HQ improvements



Refurbishment work on the accessible toilet is now nearly completed. A new shower fitting is needed and a reorganisation of materials currently stored in there.

We now have a new fence and gates at the rear of the

Headquarters in Albany Mews. The photo shows them before the gates had their coat of preservative. When the weather improves, work will continue on tidying the space here and building an external dinghy storage rack.

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

Headquarters: 92 Lower Ham Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 5BB

www.leanderseascouts.co.uk — Registered Charity Number 290029



Russ Reports



At the end of November, Hannah Edwards-Rean, Toby Edwards-Rean, James Allan and Michael Kay competed in the District shooting competition. They came first overall! Hannah got Gold for the rifle shooting in her age group and Toby got Gold in the Pistol shooting for his age group.

After half term we ran a fire lighting and safety activity to coincide with November the fifth, at the end of which the Scouts had sparklers and finished the

evening by setting off Chinese lanterns, none of which came anywhere near the trees on Albany Mews, honest! The following week was run by the PLs but, because of the weather the activities were contained within the Headquarters. A night hike/orienteering exercise in Bushy Park was planned the week after, which was completed with some success, although I managed to startle quite a few deer as well as Scouts, cycling around in the dark trying to locate some of the less directionally-aware patrols.

We were back in the Headquarters for the next meeting where the patrols were set signalling tasks using nautical signal flags, Morse code and semaphore to send and receive a set of messages from the other patrols. This proved to be very successful and only veered slightly off course when I allowed them to send their own messages 'as

long as they weren't rude' – needless to say this was somewhat ignored!

We were out and about the next week on a history tour/hunt in Kingston town centre, which I believe was completed by all the patrols. I took part in this activity with the Cubs the following week and they all enjoyed themselves as well as learning a few things along the way.

The final two meetings consisted of a quiz night with multiple categories, some of which were nautical/Scout based, travel, logical and general knowledge and then, for our final meeting, we held a games night with pizza and general nibbles which led us nicely into a 'teach the scouts how to sweep up the mess' activity. A good time was had by all !

Russ

Simon says farewell to Cubs

As we start the final week of term and the final Pack meeting of the year, we can look back to an interesting term where we tied up our Knots and Lashings, served our Chefs Badge, tracked and trekked our way through the Navigation Badge and flew through the Aviation History of Kingston.

We also careered around Kingston, notated a Nekker and, just because we could, we lit several fires and cooked egg oranges on them.

The highlight for me was the chef's badge. After a nutritional and educational talk from our own Andy Fox, the Cubs got down to preparing a two-course meal, which was judged impartially by Tim, Nick and myself. We do not have room here to go into the details of the food the pack produced, however they prepared, chopped, cooked and cleared up in a way that was of an extraordinarily high standard.

Each Pack produced tasty, imaginative and advanced foods that I, as a judge, found very satisfying. The judges obviously needed to try all the foods several times to make sure they came to the right decision at the end and I apologise to all those who may not have had their fair share at the end. I blame Tim ...

This was my final term as CSL for Leander and I am very sad to be leaving.

I started at Leander seven years ago as Assistant Beaver Leader to the extremely hardworking Karen Rean who produced the most brilliant programs for the Colony under very difficult conditions.

I took over from her when she left and moved from there to become Cub leader. I am often astounded at the commitment and efforts the Leander volunteers have given to this Group, from Nigel as our unflappable Chairman to the Beaver and Scout Leaders that I have regular contact with.

Of course I am most grateful to the other Cub Scout Leaders who have put up with me over the last few years. My programmes have often been a little ambitious, given the amount of time we have to get them completed, but not once have I seen anything but total enthusiasm.

Tim has been the regular ACSL with the Pack for the last two years and has agreed to step into the position of CSL as of next year. Tim has been a brilliant addition to the Pack since he started and fully understands the role he is taking on. I wish him fun and excitement for the future.

Mainly, though, my thanks, best wishes and fondest memories are to the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts whom it has been my privilege to lead.

Be Prepared!

Simon Biddulph, CSL

District Cub Swimming Gala

The annual Cub Swimming Gala is always an evening of excitement, fun and great swimming, and the evening of October 12th was no exception.

There were around 18 teams represented at the Gala, and Leander entered a strong team of enthusiastic swimmers, all eager to better the 4th place of last year.

The under-9¼ team was represented by Ed Orrell, Florence Baker and Sam Brickwood, the over-9¼ team by Eleanor Pullen, Jonathan Allen, Harry Lear, Kitty Finney and Ralph Talman.

There were qualifying races in each age group for breaststroke, backstroke, freestyle and freestyle medleys, and in each category a Leander Cub made it into the final. A fantastic achievement in itself.



Eleanor Pullen came a very strong 2nd place in the over-9 breaststroke final, Sam Brickwood also a fine second place in the under-9 backstroke.

Both relay teams swam extremely well, finishing 2nd and 3rd in each final.

There were some nail-biting finishes against some extremely strong competition, and everyone swam to the very best of their ability, all Cubs finishing in the top five! As parents we were all very proud of their strong team spirit, determination and their excellent achievements.

The final overall position for the team – 4th yet again, with 1st Hook A taking the trophy.

Podium position next year? You bet!

Beavers

This term the Beavers have been working towards their safety activity badge and friendship challenge badge.



For the safety badge they covered the green cross code. They identified potential dangers around the home and how to avoid them. We discussed how to be safe in and around the water. We learnt about fireworks safety. We also had a visit to the fire station which the Beavers greatly enjoyed. They made the firemen a Christmas card and took a tub of chocolates as a thank you.



A New Year Resolution

Here is an easy New Year's Resolution!

Don't worry if you don't normally shop in Waitrose. In January, Leander has a chance to win several hundred pounds in its Community Matters scheme. All you have to do is to buy something in Waitrose, Kingston and put a free green token in a donation box labelled Leander. We are one of three charities selected for January; the more tokens we collect, the better. Drop in, and ask friends and family to do the same.

Additionally, it is not too late to join in with our easyfundraising initiative ... go on, put your online purchases in the January

sales to good use by using the link below.

A huge thank you to those parents who signed up to the scheme already – we have now raised over £300!

We hope you can see the improvements which all this fundraising is helping to provide: the new fence, refurbishment of one of the gigs, new flooring in the dens, decorating the main deck, new canoeing equipment, etc. So please do your bit to help.



www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/leanderssg

As part of the friendship challenge badge we had an evening learning about life in other countries. We were very lucky to have willing volunteers who came in national dress and with a selection of local foods to try from Germany and Russia. Thanks to Iona Tomlyn and Nadya Chilcote

Harriet Williams swam up to cubs but had managed to gain all six challenge badges so was awarded the Chief Scout Bronze award.

Any parent who would like to help out on a regular basis would be very welcome!

Richard, Beaver Leader