

The Water Rat

Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

December 1998

Skipper's Scrawl

Having a December edition of the Water Rat gives me the opportunity to wish everyone associated with the Group a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Those of you who have been on the boat deck recently will have noticed that all our three new fibreglass gigs have now been delivered. Our thanks to Guild Chairman, Gordon Biden, for towing them all down from Norwich for us. The last to be arrive is fully rigged for sailing as well as rowing.

Now we need to see just what spars and rigging from the old gigs can be adapted to fit the new and hopefully we may just need to order new sails! I look forward to seeing the troop having all the gigs out together next season when hopefully some expeditions up river can be arranged. Perhaps the Venture Unit might also think about trailing one of them down to the Solent for a weekend. The boat deck is in the process of being reorganised by moving racking and it is intended to swing the two older gigs from the roof by installing two additional falls.

For various reasons we had to postpone our AGM and a new date has now been set for Monday 8th February at 19.30 when it is proposed to combine the meeting with investitures of new Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. Leander has also just been awarded the County Commissioners Standard and it is hoped that the presentation can be made on this occasion when everyone can be there. Please note the date for this special presentation in your 1999 diaries as soon as you can.

Due to the current political situation with Chile we are still not sure at this stage whether or not Asha will be representing us at the World Jamboree. The UK contingent is due to fly to Chile at the end of

December so hopefully the situation will be settled by then.

Finally an advance notice of forthcoming Leader Vacancies. At Easter, Buffy, Claire and Stephen's allegiance will be transferring to the Cub section as their sons go up so we need to recruit four new leaders for Beavers to work on a Job Share basis. We must have at least one Warranted Leader plus an adult at each meeting so please let me know if you or someone you know is prepared to help form part of the new team.

Keith

Leander Family Camp '99

Just a reminder that, by popular demand, Leander is once again holding a family camp at Chalfont Heights Scout Camp and Activity Centre, Bucks on 21/22/23 May 1999. Everyone will be very welcome – especially brothers, sisters and parents. The same site that we used before has been booked for the weekend of 21st/23rd May. The last camp was a great success in 1995, with just under 100 Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Parents attending.

If you need further information or want to ask any questions, I have arranged to come akeg to a Beavers and Cubs meeting in January.

I still need a couple of parents from the Beavers and Cubs sections who could act as contacts and relay information back to parents. This would involve two meetings between now and May – all the planning is already done. It really is a great event which everybody will thoroughly enjoy. Put the date in your diary.

Coxswain (0181 549 1599)

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Coxswain's Corner

The Troop, as always, seems to be very busy. At this time of the year we concentrate on badgework and seamanship, with a good number of awards and proficiency being attained. (We want the Marshall Trophy back!).

Every third week now a patrol organises the evenings activities – so far we have had a very ingenious crystal maze, a cunning quiz night, bridge building and variety of games. Leander once again provided a very smart presence at the annual Remembrance Day activities, handing out hymn sheets at the War Memorial and assisting at the Service of Remembrance in the Parish Church.

With the arrival of our new gigs, we are in the process of rearranging the boat deck, which is somewhat chaotic at the moment. Once the boats are slung and the relocated workshop area fitted out, we can do some work on the Coypus. Those parents who indicated an interest in boat maintenance will shortly receive a call!

After Christmas we will be preparing for the Royal Naval recognised Unit Swimming Gala in February, sorting out Winter Camp, Summer Camp and of course Family Camp in May.

A District Patrol Leaders Gamp has just been held at Polyapes Camp Site, to which three PLs and two APLs went from Leander. (See the report). A very successful event, from which all of us, Scouts and Leaders, who attended came away with a lot of ideas and very useful opinions.

Our intention is to develop and sustain the Patrol system in Leander, as it is the foundation for the Troop. Through pressure of numbers and busy Leaders, we have let the system slide somewhat, so now we have every reason to make it work as it should do.

I hope everyone has a very pleasant Christmas break and that next year will be another excellent Scouting year for Leander.

Coxswain

Beavers

Back at the end of October, we made a Halloween mural, complete with all the witches and ghosts you can imagine and, if you want to know what it's all about, it may still be on the wall at Headquarters. One evening was spent doing still life drawing and painting.

Once a month is a swimming session – all Beavers are coming on well and some have gained badges.

In preparation for Christmas, we have made some picture frames for presents, along with decorations and paper lanterns to dress the tree.



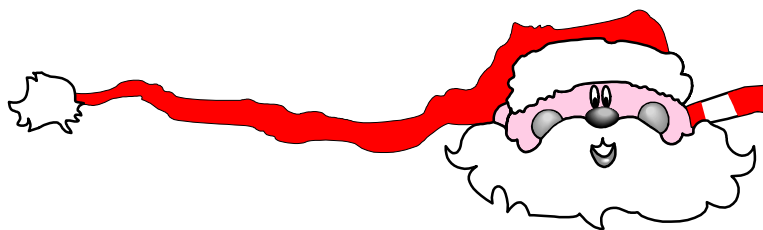
Jo Farrell has completed his Beaver Challenge badge. There are four parts to this: Personal Challenge

– Achieve something you have not done before by setting yourself a personal challenge; Scouting Challenge – Take part in an activity with other Members of your Scout Group; Exploring Challenge – Take part in an exciting activity out of doors that you have helped choose; Caring activity – Carry out a good turn that you have helped to choose. Many more are close to achieving this, but how about coming up with your evidence. There will be an ideal opportunity to present badges in February.

I do hope that a few new parents will think seriously about joining us as Beaver leaders. Steve de Souza, one of our present team has a new job and often finds it difficult to get back for 6.45 on Monday, so there is a real possibility that we may have to change to only meeting on alternate weeks.

Beavers start meeting again on Monday 11th January and, later in the term, there will be something special for Valentine's Day.

Buffy



Cub Report

Last half term I told you we would be working towards our Community badge. The badge work was spanned out over a five week period and the boys worked very well. This culminated in a visit to Richmond Police Station on 14th October. Everybody had a great time and we didn't leave any boys in the cells!!

Many of the Cubs have worked individually at home towards activity badges. Some of them have been awarded as many as four badges this term. Well done!

As a pack the Cubs have completed the Map Readers Badge this last half term, this is one of the hardest badges to gain yet they all completed the tasks with great enthusiasm.

On the 10th October the District Swimming Gala was held at New Malden swimming pool. We were represented by nine boys who all swam extremely well. The Team consisted of: Jonathan Freeman, Alex Woods, Edward Barnard, Mark Sollis, Sam Whitfield, Chris Pearce, Andrew Cunliffe, Jack Hudson, William Mitchell.

Each boy swam in a heat. The finalists were the four fastest swimmers from each heat. In the finals we were represented by Chris in the one length Freestyle, he swam a good race and finished 2nd. Andrew Cunliffe swam strongly in the 2 length freestyle and finished 3rd. The medly relay team comprised of Edward Barnard (backstroke), Jack Hudson (breaststroke) and William Mitchell (front crawl). This was a very hard fought race and we finished fifth. The final race of the evening was the four by one length freestyle relay, the team was: Sam Whitfield, Mark Sollis, Chris Pearce and Andrew Cunliffe. We got off to a flying start and led from start to finish. The overall result for the evening was fun had by everyone and by the way Leander came third, a very good result against such a high standard of swimmers.

In November the County Swimming Gala was held at Richmond. The team comprised the individual event winners from the District Gala. We were represented by our freestyle relay team: Sam Whitfield, Mark Sollis, Chris Pearce and Andrew Cunliffe. The standard of swimming was extremely high with many of the boys being club swimmers, we finished fifth in our heat and our District finished ninth overall. Well done to all the boys who took part in both events.

Merry Christmas to you all and see you next term.

Tim

PL & APL Training Camp

On Saturday morning, 5th December, five APLs and PLs from Leander joined with 19 others from the rest of Kingston and Malden District for the camp.

We arrived at Polyapes to a freezing hut, but ready for the weekend. We participated in many events intended to help with our leadership and teamwork skills.

There were also activities, such as making radio and television recruitment commercials for scouting, and a 'quick and simple' night hike, where everyone returned rather later than we were supposed to.

Refreshed by a good night's sleep (!!!) we took part in a second day of activities, including the first District Patrol Leaders' Council for nearly three years.

Everyone enjoyed themselves and learnt from the experience, from which many troops will benefit. Thanks to all the leaders and instructors and those who cooked for us over the weekend.

Laura Packer (Senior Patrol Leader)

Former Leanders

The Leander Guild Newsletter reports their 'Absent Friends' weekend in October, when they sailed in a fleet of boats to the Isle of Wight from Hardway, Gosport, Langstone and Poole. This was a wonderful sailing trip with good weather, involving the usual frivolities, nautical and otherwise. What was described as a 'quiet evening' in the Folley Inn seems to have involved 'table dancing'. Plans are well in hand for their own celebration of the so-called millenium at HQ on December 31st 1999.

Water Rat dates

Reminder for all contributors. Copy due:
March 13th, May 15th, July 10th.

Your friendly editor and wielder of the cat-o-nine-tails is Nigel Duffin, tel: 977 8305, fax: 255 3121, email: nigel@duffin.demon.co.uk. Electronic form preferred, or I will quiz you over the phone and give expression to aquatic burblings. Also photos of activities can be scanned in for printing.