



# The Water Rat



Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

December 2005

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## Skipper's Scrawl

Since the last edition of *Water Rat* the months have been crammed full of activities and I am sure you have all been looking forward to a peaceful Christmas break. That said, from the boisterous mood of the Cubs and Beavers at their meeting in December, I assume perhaps it won't be that peaceful!

I managed to get down to Beavers at their last meeting in December, presenting various badges and also had a chance to sample some of the

party food. I must say what a great job Amy has done getting into things quickly, so an appeal to you all, we must have a second-in-command to support Amy. Looking through next year's Beaver programme, I am wondering whether or not to increase the building insurance for when they do experiments for the Discovery Badge – I understand volcano explosions are on the agenda!

I am sure you have all heard that Caro has been in hospital and will want

to join me in wishing her a full and speedy recovery. The District Commissioner, Bob Bushell, joined us at the last Cub meeting before Christmas to present Paul with his warrant and, after an interesting tour of the church, the Cubs climbed the bell tower to see the bell ringing in progress. Perhaps the bell ringers had heard of Paul's presentation. So another appeal, we need an additional leader to help with cubs whilst Caro is recovering.

I am sure Scout activities will be reported elsewhere, however I am pleased that the outside activities have been continuing, with night hikes, and water activities at night. Regrettably, we have now had to take the gigs and the 'Ebbage' off the moorings for Winter. Thanks to the Explorers for their help in this, even if it is only by experience that they learn that skirts may not be the most suitable attire for climbing around in wet boats and then cleaning the boats before putting them inside!

So wait for the appeal for help with the Winter's boat maintenance programme, but in the meantime I would like to wish you a happy Christmas and look forward to an exciting programme of activities in the New Year.

Keith Maund

## DC presents Paul with his warrant



District Commissioner Bob Bushell presented Paul Kitching with his warrant during the Pack's visit to the Parish Church.

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## Beavers gain Outdoor Challenge Badges

Leander Beavers have worked very hard this term in order to gain their Outdoor Challenge Badges. After detailed discussions of possible health and safety issues, they all enjoyed a night walk along the river looking for evidence of wildlife. We discovered Chinese Mitten crabs in the water and were delighted with an aerial bat display. Foxes and water rats eluded us, but perhaps it is possible our noisy and enthusiastic Colony may have alerted wildlife to our presence.

We had a visit from a guest speaker, Colonel Nick Welch, who showed us how to pack a rucksack properly. Nick then encouraged the Beavers to engage in rucksack packing relay races. Some of us attempted to carry a fully packed professional pack. We were surprised to see more than one stagger across the room. It was a very enjoyable evening.

Our outside visit to the fire station on Richmond Road was hugely popular. The Blue Watch kindly gave us a tour of the station, conducted a detailed question and answer session, allowed us up close to the 'rigs' and, when one of the rigs was called out, we even got an impromptu display of the emergency services in action.

Working towards our badge, we also completed a map trail through an O.S.

map extract. We wanted to make a rendezvous point with other Beavers and all managed to meet up. Quiz night was fun, as the Beavers had so many questions that were very challenging. Well done to Max and Joseph for being so knowledgeable.

Swimming has been very successful this term, with all but two Beavers completing their stage one swimming badges. We are hoping to move them onto stage two next term.

We invited Keith to our end of term party. The children thoroughly enjoyed themselves. It was lovely to end the term with all the Colony being

presented their Outdoor Challenge Badges by Keith.

Sadly we have said goodbye to six Beavers who will be moving up to Cubs, but look forward to welcoming some more new eager Beavers in the new year.

Amy



## Cubs visit Parish Church



On Wednesday 7th December Leander Cub Scouts visited Kingston Parish Church.

We really enjoyed ourselves and noticed a few interesting things about the church. On the right side the pillars were wider than the left side. Also, there were a lot of gravestones lying flat inside the Church.

We were invited to climb up the bell tower, but we had to climb 50 steps

with a rope as a bannister to get to it. We weren't nervous - we are Cubs after all. The chorus of bells was wonderful.

The clock in the church chimes every hour, so when it chimed 8 o'clock we had to leave.

We said goodbye and thank you to our guide Mike.

*Ben Baker*

## Dates for your Diary

Tuesday January 10 - First Scout Troop meeting after Christmas

Sunday January 22 - HQ working party: \*Cockle, D'Souza, Geraghty, Lear, Gaffney-Harrison

Monday January 23 - Leander Executive Meeting, 8pm at HQ

Sunday February 12 - HQ working party: \*Sibley, McGuinness, Pope, Breen, Baillie

Sunday February 26 - HQ working party: \*Barley, Gardener, Ward, Sankey, Frame

Sunday March 12 - HQ working party: \*Beedham, Hearn, Jackson, Waites, Baker

Monday March 20 - Leander Executive Meeting, 8pm at HQ

Sunday March 26 - HQ working party: \*Steele, Mongan, Kimber, Howard

May 20/21 - Group Camp at Longridge

## The Mutineers

If you fancy pulling (rowing) a traditional gig up the Thames, the Mutineers, a group of leaders and parents, are looking for some fresh talent. You don't need to have been in a boat before, it's great exercise and good fun.

Talk to Ian Chappell, Rob Barnard or Coxswain

## Keep up with the Kids!

In the Spring, we're planning an activity afternoon where you the parents can try your hand at some of the activities the Scouts get up to and get some experience yourself of the fantastic equipment and facilities that Leander offers. You'll be able to learn some practical nautical and Scouting activities you wouldn't think you could master.

Look out for the date and further details.



## Coxswain's Corner

As always, at this time of year, the Troop is indoors and meetings have featured a wide variety of different activities, from bringing in five gigs off the moorings and cleaning them down (thanks Canada Geese!), to knots, seamanship, mini pioneering, an environmental project and some boisterous games.

However this time of the year is full of activities for Scouts to take part in. The District Scout and Explorer Swimming Gala took place in early November at Cheam Baths, with Leander winning the Scout Trophy.

The next day was Remembrance Sunday, with PLs and Explorers keeping the Leander tradition of distributing service sheets at the War Memorial ceremony in Kingston and assisting at the Church.

The Chess Competition in late November saw our intrepid team of Jonathan Smith, James Kimber and Alistair Exworthy battling it out against some tough opposition. The District Air Rifle Competition, a week later, now attracts a large number of competitors, Rhys Steele, Alistair Exworthy and Karen did their best against a very high standard of marksmanship.

The District Night Hike is the most popular event at this time, so this year, after an evening of map and compass theory, we had a practise navigation event in Bushy Park – it looks dramatically different on a cold November night. The District event a week later traversed the intricate footpaths and byways of Box Hill and Headley Heath. The two teams successfully completed the event, the rain held off, and then returned

to the HQ for a few hours sleep. Well done the Starboard Team, 2nd place (Alistair Exworthy, Andrew Chappell, Rachel Bungey, Lizzie McAllister, Li-ane Aviram), and the Port Team, 4th place (Rhys Steele, Ollie Biddulph, Hannah Pratt, Vivianna Gardener, Annabel Howard and Will Pearn).

The final event of the year was the Christmas meeting, which was bowling and a burger at the Spectrum, Guildford.

Please note the first meeting after Christmas will be a week later than usual – Tuesday 13th January.

Best wishes to all Scouts and parents – we look forward to another great Leander year in 2006.

Coxswain

## Parents

Keith wrote in the last *Water Rat* about how important regular cleaning, tidying and maintenance by parents is to the smart running of meetings for your children.

I have now updated the rota for parents' working parties on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. We try to group families to give a spread from all sections of Leander, so that there should always be a couple of 'long-standing' parents who will 'know the ropes'.

- 1 – \*Hazard, Rhodes, Exworthy, McDonagh, Goodwin
- 2 – \*Cockle, D'Souza, Geraghty, Lear, Gaffney-Harrison
- 3 – \*Sibley, McGuinness, Pope, Breen, Baillie
- 4 – \*Barley, Gardener, Ward, Sankey, Frame
- 5 – \*Beedham, Hearn, Jackson, Waites, Baker
- 6 – \*Steele, Mongan, Kimber, Howard
- 7 – \*Pearn, Biddulph, Hayes, Waller, Rilett
- 8 – \*Whitfield, Smith, Bowers-Clarke, Lawley-Gibbs, Newsome
- 9 – \*MacAllister, Webb, Talman, Corcoran, Maxted
- 10 – \*Aviram, Walters, Howe, Kersey, Davies

Refer to the 'Dates for your Diary' for when your 'team' is on duty. If you are unable to make your date, please arrange a swap with someone.

We normally work from **10am to 12**. Would the \*first named on the list arrange to collect a key from Mike Freeman (306 Kings Road, O20 8549 8634).

Nigel

## Leander Group Camp 2006

This Family Camp will be over the weekend of 20/21 May 2006 at Longridge Scout Boating Centre, Marlow, Bucks.

Everyone is invited – Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Explorers, parents, leaders, helpers.

Activities will include rowing, kayaking, Bellboating, air rifle shooting, climbing, an assault course, camp fire, and much more.

More details will follow later. The price is to be confirmed, but you should get your 2006 diary and put this date in now.

If you want any more details at present or want to help out organising, please contact Karen via email : [lkazza@aol.com](mailto:lkazza@aol.com).

