



# The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

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## Survival Camp



At the end of September, a large number of Leander Scouts and Explorers took part in Royal Kingston District's Survival Skills weekend, held at Broadstone Warren Scout camp site in deepest rural Sussex. Over 130 young people learnt how to make water filters, survive in

wild country, navigate without a compass, prepare all their own camp food, cook over open fires, make their own bivouacs and sleep out under the stars.



*filtering water*



*proud of my bivouac!*

Broadstone Warren is a wonderful site, with acres of open woodland, perfect for this type of event. Needless to say, everyone gained the Survival Skills badge and thoroughly enjoyed the unique atmosphere and perfect weather.

## Beavers move

The Beavers' move to Fridays went successfully and we have welcomed some new members. We continue to have a strong parent rota, which is essential to running meetings, so my thanks to all of you. We hope to find a regular assistant to help with the Colony, so do get in contact if you are interested in joining in the fun.

This term, we have been learning about Disability, Communication and Safety in our badge work. Our valuable Explorer Scout volunteers have been leading fun games and problem solving activities, including a blind trail

in the boathouse – they were concentrating so hard it actually went quiet!

We have an outside speaker from the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association with their working dog visiting, a local Community Police Officer to talk to us about stranger danger and a swimming session planned. The District Beaver Party takes place on 15th November which we are very excited about and have a Colony Christmas party to plan.

I have resorted to using a whistle, as I simply can't shout as loudly as Karen to get the

attention of our enthusiastic, happy and loud Beavers – we seem to be cracking through the activities and finding time for a drink and biscuit so hopefully they don't mind too much!

I look forward to getting to know the Group better in the coming months and have received a warm welcome from many, which has been great.

*Cathy (BSL)*

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## Scouts survive

After the end of the Summer term the Scouts were quickly off to Summer camp. This year we went to Broadstone Warren, which is part of Ashdown Forest in Sussex. The first day was bright sunshine and perfect for us to set up camp and get everything organised. However, this lulled us into a false sense of security. That night and all of the following day it bucketed it down. This wasn't all bad as the Scouts learnt important lessons in why you should secure your tent door properly and how to organise your kit in the bell of the tent so it doesn't all get wet.

Unfortunately for the Scouts these lessons were learnt retrospectively! We carried on with our activities regardless and got on with some bushcraft, crate stacking and grass (water) sledging and ended the day with a huge fire as per usual, which went some way to drying things out and cheering people up.



The rest of the week saw the weather improve hugely and made the rainy day seem but a distant memory or a bad dream, depending on how wet you got.



We had eighteen Scouts and six Explorers in total, who all took part in and enjoyed a wide range of activities, such as climbing, rafting, bushcraft, shooting, archery, pot holing, night line, pioneering and inflatable sumo wrestling. We also ran our own camp-craft activities and all the Scouts managed to attain their Outdoor Challenge badge.



The camp hike was planned by myself and Jim and we did a camp recce and walked the hike a few weeks before the camp. I'm a firm believer that you can't plan a hike on paper, you have to actually walk it to prove that it is possible. This practice served us well as there were several things that existed in reality that weren't on the map, including a complete golf course! We also found that the woods that Jim and I walked through on a nice Summer's day looked very different at night when we actually walked with the Scouts. That, coupled with the fact that one of the markers on a fence that the Scouts had to find was not only missing but the entire fence had been removed as well!

The Leaders' rule was that we weren't actually on the hike we were just there in case they got into difficulties, so their mistakes were theirs to make, but I had to bend these rules on one occasion to prevent a sign for 'Uckfield' being modified.

The Troop re-convened for the Autumn term in September.

The Leadership team have planned the programme to place more emphasis on badge work as well as keeping up our nautical theory exercises. The first couple of weeks were dedicated to aspects of survival to give all the Scouts a good grounding in survival, as well as prepare those going on the survival camp at the end of the month.

The meeting following the camp was a night navigation exercise using compass bearings and distances to navigate a course and answer questions along the way. This was completed by all the teams to lesser and greater degrees around the environs of Canbury Park.

The following week we undertook to complete the Digital Citizen stage two badge, which involves acquiring, designing, modifying and storing images as well as digital communication using computers, phones and cameras. My thanks go to the parents who gave up their time and equipment to come down and help with this exercise. We had enough helpers to enable us to split the Troop into groups of three, which hugely helped each individual get involved and take part. Here's looking forward to resuming after half term with lots more help from the parents!

Russ



Where did I put that needle?

## Laying-up Supper

Is there a future for the Guiltineers???

A small celebration broke out recently at HQ, involving the Guild (and Mums) and Mutineers rowing crews and the wonderful Leaders who had helped with this year's Great River Race.



There is intense rivalry between these two crews, so it was wonderful to see peace breaking out temporarily over a few glasses of wine and some food. The 'Laying Up Supper' was also a great opportunity to thank Dick and Robin, whose hard work with maintaining the boats is really valued and sometimes overlooked, and to all the helpers and Leaders who give so much of their time.

The Guiltineers have also been out for a Sunday morning row up to Hampton Court ... so watch this space for more antics.

Leander Mums and the Guild would like to invite anyone interested to row with them on Wednesday evenings, leaving Leander HQ at 6.30pm and returning around 8.45 pm.

No experience necessary!  
Contact Fiona Firth,  
firthfj@aol.com

## Work at HQ

The lights in the toilets are now movement sensitive.

The boat rack has been roofed.

The water heater for the toilets has been repaired.

Roof and gutters have been cleared of moss and the downpipe at the river end fixed.

## A New Structure

We have had a very encouraging response to our message about the important changes needed at Leander, both from those attending one of the two meetings we held and also via email. Everyone appreciated the fantastic opportunities that Leander gives to young people and also the need for more parental involvement.

There has been a wide range of skills offered. We will be arranging a meetings to coordinate those who offered, for instance, maintenance, fundraising, finance and nautical skills. The rest of you have not been forgotten, but it may take a few weeks for us to get a system for benefiting from your offers of help.

For those who have not yet responded, I do want to stress how the future of the activities we offer at Leander does depend on giving our leaders more support. We are still searching for someone to take over the role of GSL and we need to make sure that the tasks involved in the job are limited to those necessary to manage the Group and that as much administration as possible is taken on by others.

So, if you have not yet offered your support, please look through the list of suggestions available on the website, under 'Our files', 'Membership', Family Volunteering List.

We are particularly looking for people to represent parents on the Executive Committee and also to maintain lists of skills available for instruction. And, of course, we are always especially keen to hear from anyone who would be interested in finding out about what is involved in being a leader – a rewarding opportunity which can be fitted in to the time you have available.

*Nigel Duffin*  
(Chair of the Executive Committee)

## Great River Race

Once again, Leander entered a large number of gigs in this year's race; Scouts, two Explorer crews, the Guild, Mutineers and Rotary battled the waves. It was a hard pull, a strong tide and an adverse wind made it quite demanding for every crew, but they all complete the course in good times.

Scouts, under 14, rowing wooden gig Active, completed the course in 4¾ hours; the younger, under 16 Explorer crew, rowing fibreglass gig Hero, were 2 seconds slower; the older, under 18, Explorer crew in fibreglass gig Chief finished in just under 4 hours; the Mutineers, rowing fibreglass gig Hercules, took 3 hours 35 minutes; the Guild and Mums crew, in wooden gig Alert were 33 seconds faster!



It is such a unique event, with around 330 boats taking part, from over the UK and Europe, a real carnival atmosphere and thoroughly enjoyable for both rowers and spectators.

## Fundraising

In these days of austerity, there is a painless way for you to keep Leander subs as low as possible!



A relatively small number of our supporters have signed up with easyfundraising, yet they have already raised over £600.

It is surprising the percentage that some online retailers will donate to charity in this way ... Amazon, John Lewis, M&S, Argos, Tesco, Ocado, Maplin, Boots, Sainsbury's, eBay, booking.com, trainline, easyJet, etc., etc.

This is not a recommendation to shop at any of these, but rather a recommendation to go to [easyfundraising.com](http://easyfundraising.com) before your Christmas shopping, so that Leander is the beneficiary!