



# The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

March/April 2020

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## Troop – ‘Come dine with me!’

For the Scouts’ first meeting after the Christmas break, we decided to help them burn off some of their Christmas excesses by setting up an obstacle course for them. They competed in teams and as individuals on a course of varying complexity and difficulty, ranging from easy to blindfolded.

In preparation for the upcoming County night exercise, the next two meetings were dedicated to map reading exercises and then completing a compass course around Canbury Gardens and along the river. To put all the theory into practice, the next meeting was a mini-night-hike in the area around Ham House, the majority of which was on paths and fields with only one road to be crossed. We also managed to cross paths with some of Peter-sham and Ham’s Sea Scouts, who were geocaching in the same area.

We wanted to teach the Scouts some of the traditions and history of Scouting, so Coxswain (Robin) ran an evening entitled ‘Scouting: the old days’, where the Scouts learnt about Scouting’s history and why certain aspects of Scouting exist as they do.

On the 9th of February a small contingent of the Scouts competed in the County cooking competition with the theme of ‘Olympic cookery’. The Scouts did very well and gained 2nd place in Kingston and Malden

District and 9th overall in the competition. My thanks go to Chris Stone, who helped and supervised the Scouts for the competition, as well as acting as taxi driver for them. Much appreciated, Chris!



The meeting before half term was run by the Cub Leaders, Tim and Chris, where they re-created their ‘Escape room’ activity for the Scouts. All the Scouts managed to decode the clues and ‘escape’, with thankfully no bits of them blown off by the bomb being detonated. Thanks Tim and Chris.

Each year we try to incorporate at least one Activity Badge into the programme and this term the Scouts completed the Local Knowledge badge. To complete this they had to research and name local tourist attractions and places of interest, sporting and leisure facilities, emergency services and local amenities. They also had to plan several journeys using public transport, as well as research the tide tables and plan a trip down the river to Richmond and back.

Our final meeting of the term, although we didn’t know it at the time, was a swimming session at New Malden leisure centre, where nearly all the Scouts who attended gained a higher level on their Swimming Activity badge.

Now to the present: As you now all Scouting activities in the UK have been suspended due to the Covid-19 virus. Several activities and a camp that we were going to run have been cancelled, with possibly more to come. The Regatta looks doubtful, but my fingers are crossed that the Summer Camp will still be able to take place at the end of July.

I hope that you and your families are well and try to remember to ‘Stay Safe’ if you do have to venture outside.

*Russ*

## Survey

A huge thank you to those who have already completed our Leander Survey, and to those who have offered to help out. We know these are difficult times but we really appreciate the ideas and suggestions. There is still time to complete the survey so do follow the link below ... it only takes about 3 minutes!

[www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WSRCRHT](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WSRCRHT)

*Andrew*

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## Coxswain's Corner

It is strange to see the River Thames completely empty: no boats, no movement at all. Similarly all is quiet at Leander, however the Group is moving forward, keeping projects live and carrying out essential administration. We are most definitely not locked and shuttered, our intention is to keep in touch with all members of the Group and, where possible, use the virtual communication opportunities now available.

Obviously all our hirers have ceased activities; that income has made a difference to our finances, helping to enable projects and improvements to the Headquarters to reach fruition. Our reserves are in good shape though, we just have to manage our finances carefully and commit to essential matters first.

Just as the lockdown started, we installed proper heavy duty hand dryers in the washrooms, so no more soggy towels or wet hands! Replacing our heating system and associated work is vital but

proving to be very trying: endless discussions with utilities and manufacturers are taking forever. Although we now have planning permission for the back yard, this inevitably will slip down the 'to-do' list. Refurbishment of our Home Counties gigs has not commenced as the boat builders are in lock down and closed.

Considering that Scouting may well not recommence until September, the Leaders are meeting online to discuss how we can keep all our young people engaged and enthusiastic. As online activities are growing, the official policy is to embrace 'The Great Indoors', with activities and badges to be gained. If at all possible we would hope to run activities for all the sections in the school holidays – getting out on the water again would make all the difference for everyone.

Stay well and look after yourselves.

Coxswain

## Pack Pack Pack!

Before the coronavirus brought an abrupt halt to our face-to-face meetings, the Cubs have had a busy term. Being part of a Sea Scout group, we're always keen to introduce our Cubs to water activities, even in the colder months. This has involved a swimming session with the Cubs continuing to make good progress through the staged swimming badges.

Most of the Pack also had the opportunity to take part the District Wobstacle event, basically a large inflatable obstacle course in a swimming pool. Finally, and for what turned out to be our last Scouting activity before the lockdown, we got some paddling practice in at the kayak pool session organised jointly with the Scouts and Explorers at Hampton open air pool.

All this practice pays off and, since I haven't written for a while, I'll also take the opportunity to congratulate our Cubs once more for winning the District Cub Swimming Gala back in November.



As well as having fun, we also try to teach our Cubs some useful skills. For the Cyclist badge, we covered how to maintain a bike, mend a puncture and keep safe while cycling. We then made use of those skills (including the puncture repair!) during a night cycle around Richmond Park. It was great to see so many Cubs and parents joining us for the ride, and particularly well done to those who made it round a full lap of the Park.

As we look forward to the warmer weather, we'll be trying our best to keep our Cubs involved with Scouting remotely, and looking forward to the time we can get together back on the water and having fun outdoors.

Tim

## Ahoy there!

Solutions to the December post-Christmas nautical quiz. These are the pairings decided by King Neptune.

If you have all correct, why not award yourself a bit of time at home and lock yourself down for a few months!



bottle screw ... empty bottle



Surrey county lion ... county of Surrey



tally ... tally band



bight ... bite



red ensign ... red traffic light



sheep ... sheepshank



sheet bend ... bed sheet



bow ... bow



# New Adventures for the Beavers

We had a lot of new Beavers join this Spring, so we are delighted to welcome them and their families to our wonderful Scouting community. We said goodbye to our senior Beavers Henry and Martha, who swam up to Cubs and were looking forward to more challenges and fun.



This term we have been working on the My Skills Challenge badge and the Communicator badge. We have been learning about clean and healthy teeth, eating a good idea, 'treat' foods and getting active with line dance and lots of games. Yes, everyone joined in with the line dance, which required some concentration but was great fun.

We have also been learning about communication with the help of parents, cheerfully being dumped in the deep end to help Beavers send emails and make telephone calls. Our fantastic Young Leaders (Duke of Edinburgh volunteers) have been teaching the Beavers the phonetic alphabet and morse code, running games and generally being climbed over and doing crowd control! They are very game and much more exciting than the Leaders (for which we are grateful).

At our log chew the Beavers decided to have a pirate-themed evening just before half term where we dressed up, played pirate games and decorated cakes, which we managed to get a photo of before they were eaten up.



We learned to roll our Leander scarves, light a candle and do some problem solving with marshmallows and that rare thing, spaghetti.



Some of us went to the District Beaver Science event in Chessington and tried various experiments, including chromatography and hot air balloons. Thanks to the team of Dads helping that day: they were really great.

Sadly we had to cancel the last session of the term due to Covid-19 social distancing, but have plans to meet via Zoom for the new term. That may be a new adventure for Yogi and the Beavers, but I am sure we will manage! We have a closed facebook group and a Whatsapp group, so we are keeping in touch and look forward to many silly photos of Beavers getting up to Scouting activities at home.

You can do badges at home, so look them up on the Scout UK website and keep a good record so you can send an email and some photos or a poster to Yogi and we can tick that off on our database.

Stay safe and well everyone



Yogi, Cathy Johnson  
Baloo, Helen Farrell  
Irek, Jennifer Wallington