



The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

March 2016

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Scouts prepare for the water

When resuming the meetings after the Christmas break, I always try to keep the theme somewhat light and allow the Scouts to blow off a bit of steam. Some of them won't have seen each other for a few weeks so a certain amount of tomfoolery is inevitable plus we will also have some new members up from Cubs who really don't need to be dropped straight into weather systems or nautical navigation theory. With that in mind I decided to run a series of races and challenges to help welcome the new members and aid in the teambuilding of the patrols. Plus it's a fun way for the Scouts to get back into the swing of it.

The next meeting was a refresher on map reading and compass bearings to hopefully bring up the navigation skills to the standard needed to compete in the County night exercise later on in the term.



We then ran two split meetings with half the troop climbing at White Spider in Tolworth and the other half cooking up a storm in the HQ. The activities are then swapped the following week, with hopefully everyone having done both activities and turned up at the right venue at the right time. Ever a worry of mine when we do this type of switch around. Thankfully, all went well this time!



Next was a Patrol competition to bridge and cross large gap utilising pioneering equipment. If one member touched the floor they all had to go back and start again, which happened several times with all the accompanying groans you'd expect.

After Half term we ran a couple of meetings on Nautical terms,

navigation and rules of the road to pave the way for our expected and welcome return to the water after Easter. It's a lot of information to take in for the newer members but essential knowledge for any Sea Scout to be safe and effective on the water. Obviously all the senior Scouts already know all of this.....

On the 12th of March we entered two teams into the County Night exercise and camped over at Polyapes to save getting home at daft o'clock in the morning. There were over forty teams entered and we came a very respectable 7th and somewhat misleading 36th due to a check in error at one of the checkpoints. (It would have been 6th but for this mistake). Everyone including myself and Jim enjoyed the event even if it was a tad nippy overnight.

A couple of shooting sessions were run on Saturdays during this term and were well attended and enjoyed by all who took part. Apparently some of the guns are faulty and cause the pellets to go off course, but neither myself or Jim manage to experience this when we use them. Strange I know!

Here's looking forward to getting back on the water.

Russ.

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Beavers with enthusiasm!

At Beavers this Spring Term we have been working on the Communicator and My Skills Challenge badges.



We have had fun learning a bit about Morse code and the phonetic alphabet and how to

keep fit and healthy. We played a new 'toothbrush' game which involves eradicating germs with great enthusiasm! We were challenged to design a machine and explain what it did and there were some great ideas and diagrams, many concerning sweets I noticed.

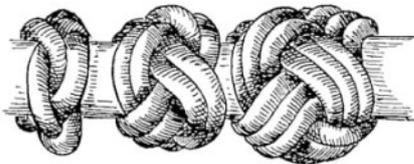
Some of us went along to the District Panto at 1st Hook, which was good fun with lots of shouting 'behind you', as is traditional. At the Log Chew, the Beavers and decided they wanted a games evening for their 'Beavers Choice', led by our ever-able Explorers, the favourite being games in the dark of course.

Many Beavers completed personal challenges this term

and showed they could be independent at home or extend their swimming skills and some learnt all about the start of Beaver Scouts.

Thank you to all our great parents for their help at meetings and enthusiasm for being on the rota. I could really use a Section Assistant if anyone fancies joining me more regularly, once or twice a month if not every week.

*Cathy Johnson
(Beaver Scout Leader)*



Leanders go on to achieve successes in GB rowing

Three young people who learned their basic boating skills at Leander have gone on to do impressively in the GB Rowing Team junior trials this February in Boston, Lincolnshire.

Out of 300 teenage rowers who took to the River Witham, the following were in the top ten finishers.

J18 MEN – Pair – Dom Jackson (Hampton School)



In an interview for *Junior Rowing News*, Dom says 'from an early age I was messing about on the water in kayaks and other boats.

I took part in the Great River Race a few times, with Leander Sea Scouts. It was a great experience, and I guess it really set me on the path towards rowing.'

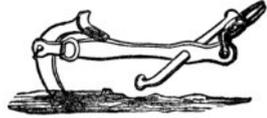
J16 WOMEN – Single scull – Clare Jackson (LEH BC)



J16 MEN – Single scull – Cameron Spurling (Kingston Grammar School BC)



They go on to the next steps on the path to selection for this Summer's international competitions.



Mutineers

On the subject of 'elite athletes', the Mutineers are a group of mostly Leander helpers/leaders, who occasionally take a gig up to Hampton Court.

The crew tends to prefer 'fair-weather social' rowing than all this competitive stuff, but they have been known to do well in the annual Great River Race.

If you are already a helper or leader and would just like to 'have a go', do let Coxswain know: gsl@leanderseascouts.org.uk.

And if you have been wondering about helping out, perhaps this might be just the incentive you need to volunteer?

Pack Pack Pack!

After a few months where the size of the Pack had dwindled for various reasons, we started the term with an influx of fresh blood. We invested nine new Cubs into the pack which is certainly a record for me. I'm glad to say our new arrivals have fitted in very quickly and have been getting stuck into the programme with enthusiasm.

An early Easter has made this a short term, but we've still managed to cram plenty in. Our main focus has been on the DIY badge.



It was with a certain trepidation that we let the Cubs loose on saws and hammers. But after a full risk assessment and safety briefing, and under close supervision the Cubs worked carefully and confidently with the tools provided.



Over the next few weeks the Cubs each prepared and assembled two different wooden toys, which I hope they're all proud of. A big thank you to Chris for putting a lot of time into planning and preparing the materials for the woodworking.

We have also been tackling the Local Knowledge badge this term, which we started by drawing maps of the local area. These were certainly creative and some of were also surprisingly accurate. We then got the Cubs outside for a 'Magical History Tour' on a remarkably cold evening, and they managed to find out lots of historical information hidden around Kingston town centre.

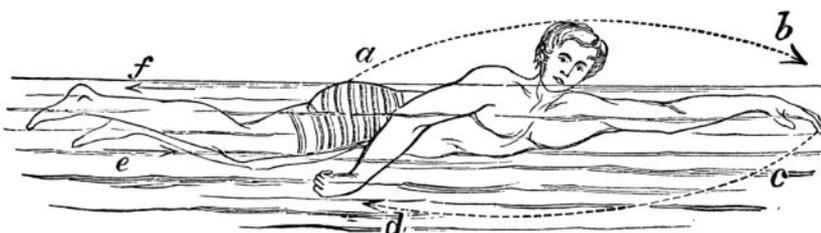
We'd really like to thank all the parents who have helped out with our various activities this term. It's been great meet you all and we couldn't have done



the DIY badge without this additional help. We're looking forward to some lighter evenings so we can get out with the Cubs more.

We are also trying to take advantage of our fabulous location and arrange a few more water activities for next term. Until then, I hope everyone is having a relaxing and enjoyable Easter holiday.

Tim, Chris, Richard and Ben.



GSL's Roundup

Well, it has certainly been a very busy period since stepping into the GSL role.

The Group is in excellent shape, with all sections thriving and lots of activities taking place, however, it is worth repeating that Leander only does so well because of the many volunteers who deliver a quality programme throughout the year. We always need more people to help and hopefully decide to join the Leadership team: it's great fun and very rewarding.

Our main efforts have been concentrated on implementing a new structure for Leander, with parents taking on different roles that have helped immensely with administration and fund raising. There is a quite a long way to go yet, so any parent who has volunteered to help, please have patience, we will be in touch shortly and will be delighted to involve you.

A reminder, St George's Day Parade is not far off and we do expect a good turnout from every section - details out shortly.

At last the weather its warming up and we can start water activities in the new term.

Coxswain

Fundraising

ef One of our steady sources of income is the easyfundraising scheme. For the first quarter of the year we received over £70.

For our larger projects, we often apply for grants. Currently, we are looking at refurbishing the back 'garden' and buying additional larger size buoyancy aids.

Ruth Bennett leads a small team which looks at grant applications and fund-raising opportunities. She would be delighted if you wanted to join them.