



The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

July/August 2016

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A great Summer for Beavers

We have had a great Summer Term, working on camp craft and other outdoor activities. The families joined together for a picnic at Canbury Gardens where the Beavers played a few games, but mostly climbed trees and explored the undergrowth, while parents had an opportunity to get to know each other better. On a walk to Ham House via the Common and the bridleway we discovered insects and tried to identify other wildlife habitats, ending with a lovely investiture in front of Ham House.



We had silly sports in Richmond Park with a doe looking on in bewilderment at welly-wanging! We managed to fit in a game involving chocolate, which seemed essential to an outing. We learned how to build a fire and didn't pass up the opportunity for marshmallow toasting and chocolate banana roasting. Robin



kindly took the reins one evening for a pioneering challenge and games. The favourite was the evening on the river when the Beavers got a flavour of what

Sea Scouts has to offer in future, and our great thanks to all the leaders who kindly gave up their time to make that happen.

We have a great group of families with parents that came up trumps every time we needed help to go out and about, so thank you to all for being part of our community. Also for baking and providing cakes and goodies for the riverside cake sales which did so well at raising funds and making a good impression on the local community.

I am looking forward to our Autumn Term!

Cathy Johnson, Beaver Leader



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Scouts on the water and the rock face

Since the last Water Rat instalment the Scouts have continued their on-water programme on Tuesday nights. Jonny, Andrew and now Neil have been making a concerted effort to help each Scout gain a BCU level award with a structured Kayak training programme. With the knowledge that a third of the Troop had never been on the water with us before the start of the term, the aim has also been to ensure each Scout gains experience at pulling in the Coypus and gigs and understands the basic boat orders and manoeuvres.

In early July we sent a somewhat depleted team to the National Sea Scout Regatta. Given the size and experience of the team, it was no great surprise that we didn't do as well as we have in past years. My thanks go to those Scouts and parents who did come along and support us, as without them we wouldn't have been able to enter a team at all for the first time ever in Leander's history.

I will be looking and urging all Scouts and parents to make a much greater effort next year to make themselves available for the Regatta. As I see it, it's like belonging to a football club and then not wanting to take part in the one match a year that your club can play in. We spend a lot of time and effort training the Scouts to be proficient in boat-handling and seamanship and find it very disappointing when we are then unable to put out a team in a competition that represents the true skill level and ability of the Troop.

On the first Saturday after the schools had broken up, we set off



for this year's Summer Camp at Phasels Wood activity centre in Hemel Hempstead. The Scouts had a fully packed activity programme over the week, including such activities as climbing, abseiling, archery, crest run, zorbing, zip-wire, kayaking plus many more.



They even got to go on a nice ten mile country stroll, half of which was in the dark, plus we took them all to the local Ice-skating rink for a morning and managed to survive it without any breakages!



All in all it was a very successful week's camp, after which I'm

sure the leaders slept as soundly as the Scouts (if not more so) when they finally got home again the following Saturday.



Russ

Cub Camp



Fundraising News



Many thanks to all the Leander families who helped bake, buy and sell for our two cake sales in July which raised over £650! The Beavers, led by Ali, did a fantastic job running the first sale and had a lot of fun (see photo).

Sainsbury's were kind enough to donate a voucher towards our events, and we would also like to thank them for welcoming us in before Christmas, when volunteers from Scouts, Cubs and Explorers raised over £400 packing bags.

We are very grateful to **Kingston Council** for awarding Leander a New Initiatives grant to pay for a brand new set of 12 gym mats for indoor activities.

We have also been able to buy 20 new buoyancy aids and are looking to purchase three new kayaks, thanks to generous donations from two grant-giving charities.

Ruth Bennett

Coxswain's Corner

Beavers, Cubs and Scouts have all been very active this summer, with lots of outdoor activities to get involved in. The Beavers have been learning to make fires, have been to Holly Lodge in Richmond Park and went out on the river for an exciting boating session. Without exception, they are all very enthusiastic.

Similarly, the Cubs very busy programme culminated with a terrific camp at Butcher's Coppice camp site, Bournemouth. I went down to help and what a great time they had, making kites, jumping into the sea, having an amazing walk along the clifftops, eating fish and chips

on the seafront at Swanage and visiting Brownsea Island, where the very first Scout camp was held in 1907.

The Scouts have mainly been out on the water every week, at least the weather was in our favour this year. Summer camp at Phasel's Wood camp site, Hemel Hempstead, was brilliantly organised by Russel and Jim, and packed full of activities. Apart from the many on-site activities, there were lots of opportunities to learn basic camp skills, enjoy some epic wide games and navigate across country on one of Russell's legendary night hikes.

Coxswain

Explorers

As the days lengthened and became warmer, it was yet another summer which meant one thing – Leander ESU were going back on the water. The usual combination of coypus, gigs, kayaks and canoes, as well as sculling over the stern which was ably led by Ed Paterson.

It was Ed who himself went on to claim 2nd place in the National Regatta for sculling over the stern, held down in Hampton Court, along with Jonathan Bennett who claimed a 2nd place in the U16 kayaking. Unfortunately, due to an injury and other commitments, there wasn't sufficient interest this year to enter an Explorer Gig crew – fingers crossed for next year!

In late July, we also attended the Summer Camp at Phasel's Wood Activity Centre, in Kings Langley. This consisted of the usual camping activities (backwoods cooking, hikes, wide games, and nights around the fire) on top of a variety of land and water-based activities put on by the centre. A huge thanks to Alex for running the group for the entire week!



Up first this Autumn is the Great River Race on 3rd September, before closing our water activities for yet another year at Leander HQ.



James

September 17th

Put the date in your diary for Leander's Family Boating Day at Headquarters.

Further details to follow!