



The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

October 2019

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Coxswain's Corner

Rather than producing another round-up of recent activities, I thought it might be a good time to highlight the skills and know-how of the people who help make Leander a successful and progressive Group.

The Section Leaders, all dedicated and highly experienced, throughout the year are responsible for keen and enthusiastic young people who thrive on the huge range of activities Leander is known for. Across all our Sections – Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers – programmes and activities don't just happen, they often require large amounts of

time to research and organise. All must meet health and safety requirements, be practical, offer real value and deliver achievable benefits.

All leaders and instructors must have valid DBS disclosures, first aid certificates, complete leadership, safety and safeguarding training and possess relevant activity permits.

Behind the 'front line' is a small regiment of skilled helpers, dealing with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements, subscriptions, gift aid, uniform and badges, legal issues, insurance, licences, hirings,

building and facilities maintenance, fleet management and boat maintenance.

The Group's Executive Committee meets regularly to deal with everything from planning and budgeting to grappling with the seemingly never-ending changes to legislation and health and safety that we have to comply with.

Running a successful Sea Scout Group is challenging: although we are a voluntary organisation we are a business now and have to operate to the standards that are required. As GSL I believe that a light touch and a gentle adjustment to the steering when necessary keeps the ship moving forward.

Great River Race Results



With all the skills mentioned on board, we are all part of a really outstanding Leander community and can all be very proud of the efforts that everyone puts in to sustain and enhance the Group's reputation.

Coxswain



Crew	Boat	Place	Start	Finish	Time
Guild	Active	145	11:51:00	15:05:40	03:14:31
Juniors	Alert	292	11:52:32	15:53:56	04:01:44
ESU	Chief	285	11:52:30	15:45:18	03:52:48
Mutineers	Hero	197	11:52:42	15:14:51	03:22:09
Rotary	Gordon Talbot	138	11:53:42	15:04:55	03:11:13



Scouts

Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

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www.leanderseascouts.org.uk — Registered Charity Number 290029

Troop gets back to basics

The tents are dry and packed away and the nights are drawing in and getting colder. Summer Camp seems a long time ago now but oh what fun we had under the sun in the New Forest.

Since returning for the Autumn term the Scouts have been out and about, firstly for one more row on the River, followed the week after by playing Wide Games in Canbury Gardens.

We then got back to basics and brushed up and improved on our knot tying skills which will hopefully mean that the boats won't drift away after being tied up by one of the Scouts next year!

Active learning was the mode for the next two weeks with Jim running a Survival lecture and exercise followed by a First aid evening which included help from Dominic Spray and Helen Sparrow who ran the CPR and dealing with wounds exercises.

On Saturday the 5th of October we helped out with the Canbury And Riverside Association, CARA Litter pick along the river bank from Canbury Gardens to the Half Mile tree. Quite ironically James and Eleanor managed to



find and retrieve a Litter Bin from the river on the Litter-Pick.

The penultimate meeting before half term was a codes and signalling challenge using Morse code, semaphore, phonetic alphabet and some secret codes being thrown in as well.

Our final meeting before the break was a mini-night hike in Richmond Park. Thankfully the more than regular rain that we've been experiencing held off for us and everyone managed to get around the course and back to Ham Gate safe and sound...I think.



Laying-up Supper



As British Summer Time was sinking slowly beneath the western horizon, the last Friday in October was warmed and brightened by the invitation from Fiona and Andrew to the annual Laying Up Supper.

'Laying up' is when you take your Scout Leaders off the water and make them ready to be ashore for the Winter.

Here are some tips for making sure your Scout Leader will be shipshape to launch onto the water again in the Spring:

- Remove sails, cushions, curtains and bedding
- Keep the battery charged
- Top up the fuel tank to avoid contamination
- Remove food from the fridge
- Pump the toilet dry
- Sponge out the bilges
- Grease all rigging screws
- A little heat and good ventilation will keep your craft sweet!

The evening was an opportunity for many of those who help make Leander run sweetly keep their batteries charged.



Fiona made sure that food from the fridge was turned into a tasty meal which certainly

topped up our fuel tanks. Despite thorough washing of the scuppers, bilges were found to be completely dry. No toilet pumping was required.



Great River Race



It couldn't have been better weather. The sun was out and there was just a gentle breeze. The start at Canning Town was a colourful flotilla of different oared boats, and dragon boats, waiting for their time to start. Crews had travelled from across the UK and Europe. Some were in fancy dress and others were taking the race very seriously indeed, hoping to beat their best time or win their category.

The Scout crew comprised Bella, Daniel, Tim, James, Joseph and Eddie. They kept each other motivated and rowing in time. At the halfway point the Scouts realised they had made great progress and could see there was a strong possibility of finishing in a really good time. From then on they were totally focused. After Chiswick Bridge they were on the home straight. By Richmond Bridge we were nearly there.



From the start we headed upstream, helped along by the rising tide. The Scouts soon got into a steady rhythm and got to enjoy the sights along the Thames. It's a great experience going under Tower Bridge and passing by the Houses of Parliament. As we passed under the bridges, we heard shouts of encouragement and occasionally saw family and friends waving at the Scouts.



There was just one other Scout boat ahead. Seeing us, the other Scouts picked up their pace. Our crew put everything they had into rowing past them. And then it was a final push to the finish at Ham House. Once across the finish line they rested on their oars – they had given it their all. It was an amazing effort by everyone - second place in the under-14s category and a fantastic time of 4:01.



Back at Leander it was the after-race party for the Scouts, Explorers, Mutineers and Guild who took part and their families. Great food and drink, and many stories of the day to tell. An excellent way to finish the Great River Race day.

Huge thanks to Robin for organising all the entries and making sure all the boats were in race condition, Nigel and Mike for towing the boats at 4am to the start, Russ for towing us all back to Leander, and Chris, Tim, Ben and Jennifer, for cooking fantastic curries and organising the after-race party.

Neil



Beavers' My World Challenge

This term we have been very busy working on My World Challenge badge and Animal Friend.



We have talked about the responsibilities of having a pet and what they need to be happy and healthy, or doing your bit for wildlife and feeding the birds in our gardens. We love hearing about what animal each Beaver looked after and sometimes the funny and unexpected information that is imparted!



We were lucky to visit Barnfield Riding Stables with Patsy to learn about her wonderful horses, their personalities, what they need to be comfortable and healthy and everyone had a small ride as well.



They are one of the few registered centres for Riding for the Disabled and they are fundraising for specialised equipment to make this more accessible. Some of our families were interested in helping out or booking riding lessons and it is great to have opened up new possibilities with a local centre.



A group of us went to give service at Holly Lodge Educational Centre in Richmond Park, where we helped tidy and clean inside and out and some of us got involved in the CARA litter pick with Scouts.

We have been learning about the UK and Britain, what the different countries are known for and the patron saints and after half term will learn about a European country for contrast.

We also visited Kingston Fire Station with Green Watch and climbed into the Fire Engine,

tried on a helmet and talked about safety at home and how and when to call 999. Sadly we were not allowed to use the Fireman's Pole, which resulted in many sad faces!



After half term we have our 'Beavers Choice' evening with Nerf gun challenges, we will be visiting St Luke's Church to learn about Christian Christmas and sketch items in this fascinating building. We will be decorating a pottery Christmas Craft with Studio 432 on Ham Parade and having our annual Christmas party with lots of parental contributions to make the magic and fun happen.

Thank you to all the parents getting involved and our wonderful Assistants Baloo and lorek and our DofE Young Leaders this term, Daniel, James, Ed and Laurence.

Cathy Johnson BSL

