



The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

July 2023

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Summer Busy Beavers



This Summer we have had a focus on My World Challenge Badge. Learning about those that serve the community, with a visit from Kingston Police, complete with van and helmets.



We also visited Kingston Fire Station, had an explore (were banned from using the pole) and

everyone had a turn at trying to hold on to the fire hose and direct the stream of water!



We learned some facts about England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, looked at the flags and patron saints. A little Coronation tea party was fun with great food provided by parents, thank you!



We learned about Ukraine as our overseas country and are lucky to have a family as members who brought some friends along to the evening. We ran a Spirit of Eurovision disco for Cubs and Beavers with a professional kids

party DJ which was amazing fun and we are planning a similar Halloween event this year.

We have had a campfire, learned some silly songs, passed balloons and done welly hanging in Silly sports at Richmond Park and will end the term with a little hike to Ham House and spend time on the water, courtesy of our wonderful Cub and Scout Leaders, who kindly give up extra time to support us and get to know their future members.

We have had several Beavers do their Explorer badge with their family, going on impressive hikes in interesting places and shared their photos and stories. Such great training for Cub and Scout camp!

- Amelie - Atlas Mountains
- Felix – Snowdon
- Rose – Helvellyn
- Tobias – Death Valley
- Youwei – Snowdon

Several got their Green Blue Peter Badge as a result of badge work last term. Oh, I nearly forgot to mention our Legoland Sleepover!

Have a wonderful Summer, Yogi

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Scouts practise their skills

The Scouts first meeting of the Summer Term saw us back out on the water with some pulling (rowing) up to Kingston Bridge and some kayaking, to get us back into the swing of things.



Starting on the Friday of the same week, we ran a long weekend camp at Polyapes and helped the Scouts brush-up on their knife and axe work, fire-lighting, and backwoods cooking skills.



There was also a chance to learn some map and compass skills, with a short six-mile hike for them to enjoy on the Saturday night. As usual, with Chris in charge of the catering, no one went hungry and we probably all went home slightly heavier than when we'd arrived!



For the remaining Tuesday night meetings, as well as the pulling, kayaking and canoeing, we've selected groups of three or four Scouts at a time to learn some basic nautical and rowing skills. Man-overboard drills, depth sounding with a plumbline, single person rowing manoeuvres with no rudder and basic boat commands to enable them to not only row as part of a crew but also to take charge of a boat single-handed.

It was our aim to re-start the weekend kayaking sessions on Saturdays but, due to work and family commitments of the leaders, we have only managed to run one so far this term. We do intend to run some more but, as usual, real-life seems to find a way of disrupting things despite our best intentions.

Summer Camp preparations are near completion: Richard, Alex and I visited the site last month to check on the facilities. We also planned and walked the twenty-plus mile hike that the Scouts will be doing at Camp, which went quite smoothly (it was a bit warm though).

Russ

AGM

This month saw a new style Leander Annual General Meeting.

You will all have seen the invite to this event and those attending had a rather special time.

Proceedings kicked off once the Beavers were off the water – many thanks to Cathy and all the helpers for giving the youngsters a taste of pulling in Coypus!

The AGM itself was short and sweet, and covered the necessary discussions and voting on how Leander is run. A huge and warm welcome to our two new Trustees – Sam and Jo.

Food and drinks were then served in our extensive garden area for a lovely Summer evening party.

Special thanks go to Ben and Joe for their Michelin-standard cheffing. Many thanks too to all the Trustees, leaders, parents and helpers who make Leander such an incredible youth charity and active part of our community.

*Andrew
Chair of Trustee Board*



Mooring relaid

Leander's elite naval engineers complete another successful mission. We now have a mooring back in the river, which means we can get some of the larger boats in place and pick up the training for the Great River Race!



Beavers' Legoland Sleepover

We were really excited to have our first Legoland Sleepover in Windsor this June. Sixteen Beavers arrived Saturday afternoon ready for an adventure with eight adult leaders/helpers and were met by the Education Team, who took us to the Learning Academy building which was to be our base.

It was a hot, sticky day, so having some air-con was really welcome! We had an introduction session and got into our groups to explore the park. Yogi had worked out a list of rides with ratio 1:3 and appropriate height restrictions, so everyone consulted the app for waiting times and headed off.

Photos appeared on the WhatsApp group of happy Beavers doing different things. Some got their driving licence, others put out fires from their fire engines, got vertigo from the Flight of the Sky Lion in Mythica. Deep sea adventure was very popular as was Ninjago and the Haunted House Monster Party (does it really turn you upside down??). The Return to Skeleton Bay pirate show was great fun with impressive antics on and in the water.

We had a pizza dinner and an exclusive 4D theatre showing (including rain, snow, wind and lighting effects) before they secured the park and put up barriers for our area so we could play outside. We set up the Beaver sleeping bags and mats in one large room and a DVD helped excited but tired little people get off to sleep – well, mostly!

Sunday started with a breakfast bag and a Lego circuits workshop where teams of Beavers made

their own Rides with spinning parts. We were eager to get to the rides which had long queues the previous day, so each group had a strategy and were ready to run to Miniland and the barrier which holds people until it officially opens. It was a bit of a scrum, but each group managed to do something great.

A wonderful parent made all the sandwiches at home and brought them to us at lunchtime and we cooled off with a DVD before carrying our packs back up the hill to waiting parents for two o'clock. It is an entirely different experience to going with your family to Legoland, but we certainly made great and lasting memories. Our 'Senior Beavers' who are heading off to Cubs soon have demonstrated stamina and will certainly be ready for Cub Camp!

Lots of parents were amazing in getting early DBS checks in preparation for this trip, kindly volunteering their time and pitching in so willingly – also making Yogi a cup of green tea to keep her going at times! Of course, we can't take all parents but are so grateful for their continuing support.

Barney (Sam) was our first aider and kept good control of the excited Beavers, showing all her excellent leadership skills. There are HUGE amounts of paperwork (all leaders doing an overnight or camp experience this), but we cracked it ... we went.

Thank you to all the parents and Beavers for making this such a special and enjoyable trip.

Yogi (Cathy Johnson)

Dynamic Duo

Let's give a standing ovation to our unstoppable duo, Robin and Nigel! On the weekend of the National Sea Scout Regatta up at Hampton Court, they flexed their muscles and wrangled boats like seasoned pirates.

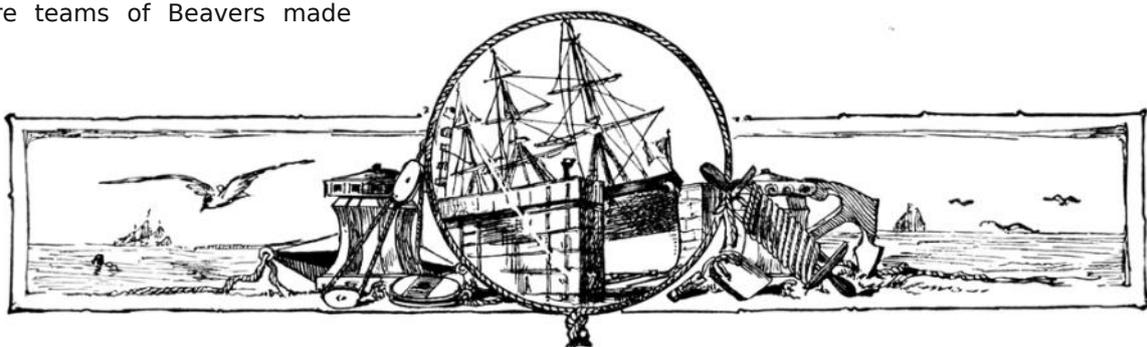
As if towing boats wasn't enough, they then unleashed their inner DJs to set up the most rockin' PA system on the River Thames. Marshalling boats like pros, they herded oars and competitors with equal finesse.

Robin and Nigel, you've earned your sea legs and made a great contribution to Sea Scouting!

Secret Semaphore (!)



Our dynamic duo heading upstream!



Polyapes Woodland Fox Sleepover



We have attended District sleepovers in the past (and Yogi has run many Guide camps over the years) but this was our first Colony sleepover so we were very excited. It was March! Although the weather was damp and cool, we made the most of our lovely District campsite, exploring the features with a quiz and free time, games on the field and a Wide Game (Postboxes). Beavers slept in the Mowgli Hall, which was cosy once set up with bedding, but Beavers wake up early of course, helped along by no curtains!



We did a Woodland challenge over the weekend and everyone got a Fox badge for their camp blanket or poncho. We went on a Fox trail at dusk and learned about how foxes navigate. We met some wonderful horses who



were very interested in us and heard birds singing before bedtime. We did some natural materials art adding woodland creatures to the scene and made pancake fox afternoon snacks.



Russell kindly came with us as Permit holder and built a wonderful campfire and ran a shelter building session. He also supervised the washing up (badge work ... for the Beavers rather than the Scout Leader)!

Barney organised the food which was tasty and well presented. Baloo was First Aider and Chief of Fun and Silliness. We had wonderful parent helpers who joined in with everything and provided a constant stream of squash and tea. Yogi was awarded her permit (phew) so we can plan future events!

We are immensely grateful to the Group, who supported Yogi and the Colony in buying and setting up kit for Beaver sleepovers, which is significantly different to Cub and Scout camps. They were keen to support the younger section in providing an overnight experience and have subsidised us this year while we get organised and develop systems and paperwork.

Beavers do not have access to the water activities the older sections do, so this is a great investment and enabler for our programme. Thank you.

Yogi (Cathy Johnson)

Coxswain's Corner

Over the last few months the Group's sections have been busy with a great variety of activities.

Without the support of the Trustee Board, dedicated Leaders and willing parents, we would not be able to retain our reputation as a Sea Scout Group that fully meets our Scouting requirements, provides effective nautical training and enables all our young people to acquire valuable skills for life.

We have ensured that our fleet of craft are all in good shape and can meet the required safety standards. The two safety boats have undergone substantial maintenance; two of the Home Counties gigs have been refurbished; and the Leander mooring, just downstream of Steven's Ait, has been reinstated. A number of larger kayaks, suitable for Explorers and tall people, have been acquired and additional buoyancy aids added to our stock.

Projects continue on the HQ: the stair wells from the Main Deck to the Boat Deck have been painted with hard wearing floor paint, providing a much improved and safer surface.

The Galley is a long term project. It is essential that we get the cost right, but, as the water heater has just failed, there is a degree of urgency there.

Following the AGM, we hope to engage with more parents with skills and time to offer, as that is steadily proving to be an excellent way of supporting the section leadership teams. The more support, the better the activities we can provide.

Coxswain

