



The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

October 2011

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A big clear up

Since the start of term, Leander has been very busy on and off the water as per normal.

At the beginning of September, six Scouts and six Explorers took part in the annual Great River Race, covering 21 miles from London Greenwich to Richmond Ham House. They were joined by crews from the Leander Guild & Mums, Cooper Thames Ditton BMW and lastly by our two friendly police crews Team XIX Plus 1 and Bechgyn Tew. Sadly the Leander Mutineers had to withdraw in the week before the race because of injury and cross dates. I am still unable to confirm the finishing results, as the organisers have to sort a few incidents that happened on the day that could change the final results.

Thank you to the group of parents, leaders and young members, assisting the Leander Skip Day. At approx 9am a local skip company arrived and left us a 6 yard skip empty and by 11am the working party had filled it to the brim. The hard work did not stop there, with Leander then moving out on to the water assisting CARA (Canbury And Riverside Association) with the second litter pick of 2011.

It is very pleasing to see all sections working hard taking part in many activities and gaining awards, with thanks to the effective parent rotas. But Leander does really need a permanent leadership team in each section. It does not mean giving up every week to assist in running a section

meeting, but a few more adult volunteers would be wonderful, especially when the section leaders have work or other Scouting commitments to fulfil.

Lastly a BIG thank you goes to Andrew and Fiona our new Grant & Fundraising Team Leaders. They offered to take one of the biggest tasks in helping Leander to raise money to replace equipment and to make vital repairs to the Headquarters. For Leander to be able to gain any grants from the Local Authority or the Royal Navy, we all must be seen to be trying to raise funds to match any grant requests.

So if you feel you would be able to help out on a more regular basis or join the Fundraising Team, please do respond to the recent email, or have a chat to Andrew and Fiona or myself and we will be happy to fill you in on what is needed.

Karen



EGM

There will be an Extraordinary Meeting of the Group Council at 7.30pm on Monday 12th December, to consider and approve the accounts for 2010/2011, which had not been inspected in time for the AGM in May. Parents are invited to attend. The accounts will also be available on the Group website.

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Busy Beavers

The Autumn term started slightly early this year with six Beavers attending the District sleepover at Berrylands HQ. The Beavers had a very productive and creative weekend with many craft activities and, in small groups, produced a short drama/play.

We then welcomed five new members into the Colony with Jude Allnutt, Sam Brickwood, Euan Janes, Aiden Malka and Sam Longhurst invested in mid-October.

The Autumn term is always very busy and we are working towards one challenge badge and one activity badge.

For the Promise challenge badge we have been learning the Beaver Scout promise and

talking about doing you best. They also suggested some interesting ideas on how to make Beaver meetings fun for everyone.

As part of the Promise badge and Faith activity badge we were able to arrange a visit St Paul's Church on Queens Road, where we learned about the history of the building and the many different activities that happen there all days of the week. The Beavers completed a quiz and will be producing posters about their trip. Later this term we will be writing some prayers around remembrance.

Six Beavers took part in the District Explorer afternoon held at Southwood Activity Centre in September where they learned about famous explorers from

Vasco da Gama to Sir Edmund Hillary and many others. Leander was recognised over all the other Beaver Colonies attending the event for designing and building the best shelter to keep our little mascot safe, warm and dry overnight.

Swimming is progressing well, with one session completed at Teddington Pool in October and another planned for November, where several beavers should be able to successfully complete their Stage 1 or Stage 2 swimming activity badges.

Upcoming events include the District Beaver party in November and in a Pantomime for Beavers and Cubs to attend in January.

Richard

Russell's Round Turns

Shortly after the National Regatta in July the Troop set off for Summer camp at Longridge Activity Centre near Marlow. We were camping on an island in the Thames, which gave us a certain amount of privacy but did present a few 'bathroom' dilemmas! The easiest way to get to the mainland (sounds dramatic but it was only 25 metres) was to scull over the stern, because of the narrow gaps at the pontoon. After seeing myself or Tom scull over the stern, several of the other Scouts asked to be taught how to do it.

So I drew up a programme to teach them and, by the third day, every Scout at the camp had asked to be taught how to do it. By the fifth day all the Scouts at camp (but not all the Leaders) were proficient enough at sculling to be let loose on their own. This prompted quite a few appreciative comments from



some of the other groups at the camp who didn't realise anyone, let alone Scouts as young as ten, could still scull over the stern.

In the evenings we sat around the fire which we were lucky enough to keep going all week – a huge branch had broken off one of the trees on the island. No quick-burning pallet wood for us! As usual the fire produced the same hypnotic effect on some of the Scouts as it always has. It was like waving a pocket watch in front of their faces and telling them they were sleeeeeeeepy, and the compulsion for some to get a stick and poke it was just too overwhelming.

True to form, on the last day it rained, which meant a lot more work when we returned to Headquarters, hanging all the tents up, but, because of some forward thinking on the leaders' part and a weather report on a Blackberry the day before, we were able to

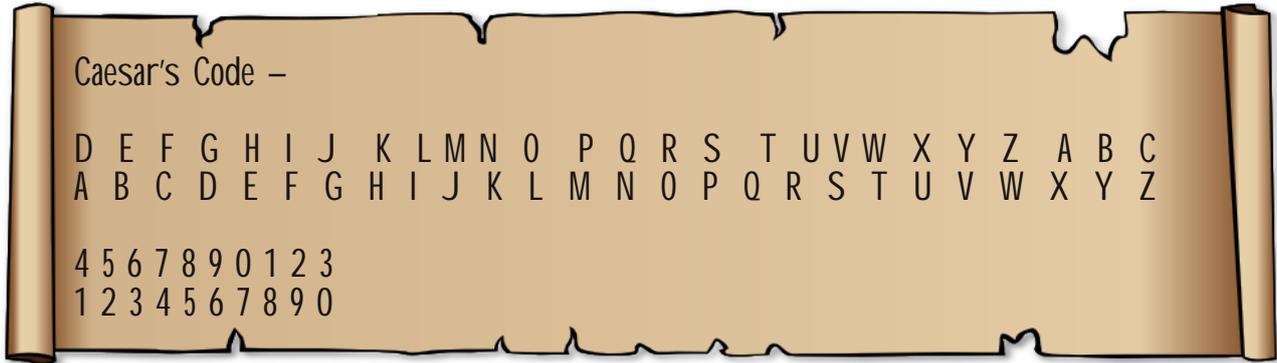
minimise the amount of tents that got wet. The wonders of modern technology!

At the end of September the Troop entered an under-14 gig crew in the Great River Race from Greenwich to Richmond. 21 miles all told. The weather was horrible, with rain showers on and off for most of the race and a strong headwind to contend with. We completed the race in 4 hours 8 minutes and came second in our class by our calculations, but this has yet to be confirmed.

Along the way we nearly lost Eleanor over the bow when we hit four foot waves coming up to Tower Bridge and Joe nearly suffered a urological incident, which was narrowly avoided by the use of an improvised bailer. I was very impressed by the whole crew who, after 18 miles of rowing, really dug in for a strong finish and rowed full pace all the way from Kew Bridge to the finish line. I'm sure they all slept well that night, I know I did.

Russell

SDFN SDFN SDFN! – Lvvxh 7



Well here we are already. Half way through the Autumn Term with a good list of boxes ticked.

We welcomed the Beavers who swam up and also Alice Patterson, who started straight into Cubs, and has seamlessly integrated into the Pack already. The new Sixers and Seconders have taken on their responsibilities well and we have instigated a new Pack Position of SUPER SIXER. A Cub who shows exceptional Scouting qualities, such as showing consideration for others, sacrificing something to aid someone else or making a supreme effort in a particular area can win the Super Sixer Sash for a week. The wearer of the Sash assumes the responsibility of the duty Sixer, leading the Howl and raising or lowering the flag.

We have done most of the work required for the Personal Safety Badge that Nick was running and have made good progress on the Communicator Badge with a multi-method Chinese whispers attempt in Canbury Park.

For this we split up into five groups and scattered around the park. The idea was to send a message from one group to the other until finally it reached the first group again. The message had to be converted into the Caesar Code, sent via can and string to the next group, semaphored to the next group, Morse

coded to the next and sent via a radio link to the final group. This was a very challenging activity but I am pleased to say that we did get the message through. Albeit slightly enhanced!

Disappointingly, we could not take part in the District Swimming Gala this year, as we could not get a team together in time. This is not really due to any lack of interest from Leander Cubs but more due to the very short notice District gave us for the event. We have done well in the galas of previous years so we will have to make up for it next year with an overall win.

Next we have more badge work for the Communicator Badge and we will make a start on the Creative Challenge Award. Swimming and Wide Games. We will be cancelling the Campfire with traditional Scout songs and stories until we get the use of the garden back from being used as temporary boat storage area.

Exciting News

Leander will be taking part in a Great British Museum Sleepover.

23 of our Cubs plus five leaders/adults will sleep in the Egyptian Gallery Tomb Of The Unknown Craftsman on December 10th. I am looking forward to reporting on this in the next instalment of The Water Rat.

Coxswain's Corner

The Troop has now reverted back to meeting as one section, rather than dividing into two age groups. (This works well when numbers are high). As usual in Autumn, there is a certain amount of nautical housekeeping to carry out, all the boats, canoes and kayaks have been cleaned out and there will be small repairs to do over the Winter.

A very successful HQ big cleanup took place, filling a skip with all the junk that accumulates over time. On the same day, Scouts joined in the CARA riverside litter pick and then had the season's last boating in the afternoon.

Toby Rean and Ben Tahsin took part in the County Orienteering event at Roehampton University, great fun and very well organised. Toby also competed in the National Scout Air Rifle Tournament at Bisley, the largest event of its kind. We had a swimming night at the Malden Centre, lots of lengths and badge requirements completed, with the majority of the troop now reaching Stage 4 of the swimmers badge. An excellent result, as we always insist on a high standard of swimming ability at Leander.

We have a night hike practice coming up (Richmond Park in the dark!) but most importantly, our RN inspection is coming up soon, so we will be making sure that our turnout and activities on the night will be well rehearsed and looking good.

