



# The Water Rat

The Newsletter of Leander Sea Scouts

October 2014

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## Great River Race



*Scouts (interesting starting position, but still class winners !)*



*Explorers (a seriously competitive crew)*



*Guild (record-breaking time, despite taking on all that water...)*



*Mutineers (the training helped, but the new flag and go-faster T-shirts really made the difference)*

This year's Great River Race saw all the Leander crews finish in a very good time, despite the choppy conditions from the start to the Pool of London.

Scouts, Explorers, the Guild, Mutineers and the Rotary all finished within a few minutes of each other, though of course the different handicapping affects the final times.

The Scout crew once again retained the Ted Springer Trophy for the best under-14 crew to finish – an excellent result.

The Mutineers recorded their fastest time ever, the first Home Counties gig to finish – an excellent race.

Very well done to all the crews – a bit of practice and a bit of polishing of techniques does produce the results.

Coxswain

## Leander (Kingston) Sea Scout Group

Headquarters: 92 Lower Ham Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 5BB  
[www.leanderseascouts.co.uk](http://www.leanderseascouts.co.uk) — Registered Charity Number 290029



## Pack Pack Pack!

We started the term with a shortage of adult volunteers after Andy moved away from the area. So thanks to all the parents who have helped out, and particular thanks to Ruth Bennet who has been helping on a more regular basis.



In September, we learned about maps and navigation for our Map Reader badge. This is actually quite a demanding badge, so we had a couple of indoor sessions going over the theory, including our human battleships and a massive contour cake. The cake went down particularly well and Chris is now determined to use cake as a teaching aid as frequently as possible! (although possibly not for the Fitness Challenge Badge...)

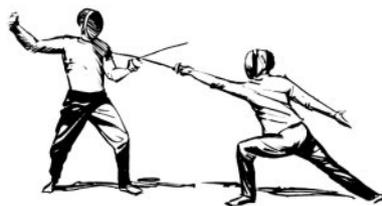
We also managed to get out for an evening in Richmond Park before the clocks went back, to put these skills into practice. Despite a difficult course to follow, falling darkness and a noisy stag wandering around, the Cubs did remarkably well and earned a lot of Malteasers.



We had a great evening learning some first aid skills with the help of several parents. The Cubs got stuck into learning what to do in an emergency and how to treat a range of injuries. We had fun practising bandaging (made more realistic by copious quantities of fake blood) to such an extent that our closing ceremony looked like a gathering of the walking wounded.



We are also trying out two new sports this term, as part of the Fitness Challenge Badge. With the amazing range of sports our Cubs already participate in, it was tough to find sports which were new to most of them. So, the Cubs had an exciting evening scaling the heights of the climbing wall at White Spider indoor climbing centre, while Chris and I had a slightly less exciting cup of tea while watching from the bottom.



Our second new sport, which should appeal to all fans of *Pirates of the Caribbean* or the *Three Musketeers*, will be fencing. We look forward to an exciting half term, including that and other activities, and wish our Cubs well in the upcoming District Swimming Gala.

Tim

## 50 years ago

*In the Water Rat of October 1964, 'Shrimp' writes about Sandling, Leander's sailing cruiser.*

The season began with a most enterprising four day passage from Kingston to Gosport, some 250 miles, with the Senior Scout Leader in charge and Two Rovers and Senior Scouts as crew.

The 48 hours previous to their departure saw Sandling lifted by crane from Ham Basin onto a transporter, taken to Becket's yard, there re-floated, towed to Headquarters, where the deck was repainted and her engine coaxed into splendid health. Loading of all gear and provisions followed.

On the way down river, as she passed Ham Basin, the mast was brought on board, although it was actually stepped that night on Greenwich pier. Having a crew of four on board meant that a watch system of four hour on and four hours off was most suitable and that was kept up the whole trip.

Most types of weather were experienced, including a thick sea fog off Beachy Head, when the crew appreciated the new transistorised radio direction finding gear. They got there.

Since then, Sandling has been sailed most weekends from her excellent moorings at the Royal Naval Yacht Centre at Gosport. From here, members of the Troop, Senior Troop, Rover Crew, B P Guild and Rangers have crewed Sandling in the Solent more than in any previous years.

In enabling the Seniors and Rovers to put their theoretical seamanship and navigation into practice, she well repays any expense involved in her upkeep.

*There is a selection of 'archive' Water Rats on the Leander website. Look under Water Rat/Archive. More to come.*

## Scout

Since the Scout meetings have resumed following the Summer break the Troop have been mostly occupied with activities at the HQ. The time of sunset draws in rapidly and forces us off the river but allows us to concentrate on our more traditional scouting skills, all be it with a few nautical themes.

We started the term with an evening of wide games in the dark at Canbury Gardens, which allowed the Scouts to blow off a bit of steam and re-acquaint themselves with the other members of the Troop after the Summer break.

The following week we held a knot challenge night to introduce the newer members to some more advanced knots and also for the older ones to brush up. We then held a Patrol knot race to see who was (or was not) paying attention and were pleasantly surprised to find that very few of the knots requested didn't get tied.



An evening of Communications followed with the Patrols learning and sending various signal messages with Nautical signal flags,

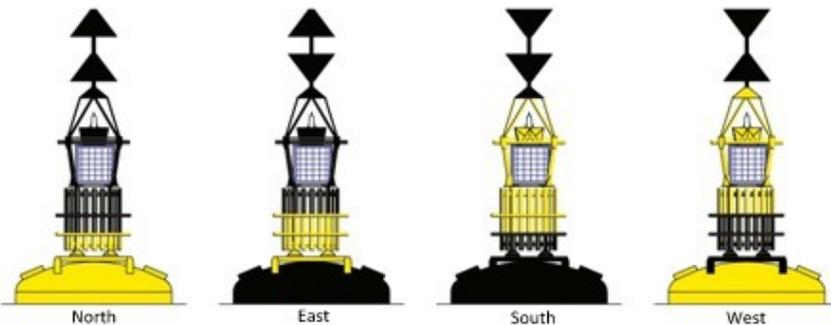
semaphore, Morse code and phonetic code using radios. This all went very well until we started to get a few cross communications with the radios and it became like a cab driver's worst nightmare!

The leaders have set out to try and teach and complete at least one core Scouting activity badge each term if possible. This term we were tackling the meteorologist badge and gave a lecture on the various different aspects and causes of our climate and weather. I would be the first to admit that our presentation was not as good as I would wish but with the visual aid equipment at our disposal I think we did quite well. We really do need someone to donate a PC display projector to the group. The Scouts were then given a two week assignment to record several weather factors each day.

Nautical terms and practices followed the week after with parts of a boat, buoyage systems, navigational lights and signs, tides and locks amongst the subjects being covered. A nautical-based game was then run to see what had been learned (and also to tire the Scouts out if I'm honest!).

The final meeting before half term was based around a Patrol quiz with questions from at least eight different subjects of varying disciplines. Despite a few instances of individuals, as well as the whole Troop at one point, 'going down for ten' due to excessive noise, it was actually enjoyed by all who took part.

*Russ*



## Fundraising



One of the ways in which we raise funds to support Leander's activities is through

[easyfundraising.org.uk](http://easyfundraising.org.uk).

When you shop online through a whole range of companies – from Amazon to Zipcar (and beyond) – the retailer gives a small percentage to a charity of your choice ... hopefully Leander! It doesn't cost you anything.

So far, 20 people make their contributions to Leander. Since we started, we have received over £400. Over the first three quarters of this year, we have had £39, £19 and £11.

Most people are turning their mind to shopping for Christmas, ordering gifts, etc. online. We want to make sure most of our nearly 200 parents and supporters make this painless contribution to the Group. We will be sending an email in a couple of weeks to 'invite' you to sign up. If you do not wish to receive this, please email the address on the front of the Water Rat.

Remember that this is one of the ways we can keep subs low and improve the facilities of Leander.



## Carpenter

We are planning a couple of reasonable size carpentry projects at the Headquarters and are looking for recommendations of local carpenters who are reliable and do good work.

If you have someone you can recommend, please email the address on the front of this Water Rat and I will pass it on to Dick Riches, who oversees HQ building work.