

## **NI Jam Report 2013**

We started the trip off with an extraordinarily early start of 4:30am to meet at Gatwick airport for 6:30am to catch an 8:55am flight to Belfast, Northern Ireland. We arrived at Crawfordsburn Country Club at approximately 11:30am where our tents had already been put up for us and we found out we were part of the sub-camp Fermanagh. We were introduced to our partner guide group from Scotland who camped with us. Early that evening was the opening ceremony. With traditional Scottish music, complete with bagpipes and zumba the camp was officially opened. We then went for a tour of the camp and saw the beach on the edge of the camp. After a short disco we went to bed.

With not a quite such early start Sunday began. We helped out at a charity fete on the campsite. Each group had to create a stall to help raise money for a particular charity. Our group ran a marble throwing stall courtesy of Sian. It was a fun afternoon of face painting, bubbles and sponges that we all enjoyed.

Day three was one of my favourite days, the active zone. We went up and down a climbing wall with our friends and all had a great time, some people proving themselves to be very good climbers. This activity was followed by the zip wire. This required a lot of bravery because after we had climbed up a very tall pole we had to jump off the edge of a tiny platform into the air!

Next we did an obstacle course. With rope swings and tyres everyone had fun some even getting soaking wet on the rope swing! After a quick bite to eat we continued our active zone day mountain boarding, a sport new to all. After putting knee and elbow pads on, we hopped onto our boards and got taught some simple moves. After our short lesson many coming away with slowly developing bruises, we moved onto go-karting. We raced each other in relays around the track having lots of fun. Go-karting was followed by orienteering around the campsite. This helped us to learn our way around the campsite better. Finally we did an activity called sky running. This was also a new activity to many. We were strapped into the bouncy blades and pulled up to standing position. I especially was extremely wobbly and it was an experience that I will never forget. Monday evening was the neon disco and talent show, we all enjoyed the music and dancing and had lots of fun.

Tuesday was the titanic zone; we caught a train to Belfast where we played a monopoly game around the city. We got into groups of six and were given our instructions. We set off looking around Belfast renting and buying interesting and fascinating landmarks, like a giant name of monopoly! We also got to use this day out to do a spot of shopping! After a long day of sightseeing and shopping whilst playing a game we caught the train back to Crawfordsburn.

Day five was the wet zone! The first activity of the day was canoeing. We played games with plastic balls and were also given challenges such as standing up and moving from boat to boat. After lunch we were given the opportunity to do "It's a Knockout"; a series of games in teams involving bouncy castles, fancy dress, bubbles and foam. We all had great fun with the sun shining and overall my team came 2<sup>nd</sup>!

Thursday, another day of exciting new activities, many of which I had never tried before. Firstly we got to try out catapulting; it was definitely new to me! Then we did some tracking,

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Bucks Bubbles

which consisted of creating moulds of footprints and also being tested on the different animal ones found in the wood. This was followed by a walk to a tower, so we could take in the environment and different species about. Then we moved onto the environmental base section of the day. We helped cut down some poisonous trees and plants to help the animals and insects that inhabited the area. After lunch we got to build some rafts. Once we had built them, we took them out on the river, many of us got very wet! After changing into some dry clothes we went onto our next station of making cowboy sandwiches by backwards cooking (cooking unusually food on a campfire). We used a campfire to cook our bacon and potatoes to put in our sandwiches; they were very tasty! Our sixth and final station was pioneering; we helped to build tripods using long pieces of wood and string as the base for building a table. Unfortunately, on Thursday evening it rained causing a power cut; so the disco was unable to be held. But fortunately the other evening activities on the camp were not affected. "The Greatest Show on Earth" was open, where small games could be played with friends.

Our final full day in Northern Ireland brought the Go zone; another day trip out! Firstly we went to the Giants Causeway; a very historical landmark that was very interesting and intriguing. We all got given an audio tour so we could walk around the sites listening to the history of the Causeway. After the Causeway we headed to Portrush. We were given an hour to look around the area. Then we went into many gift shops and bought small souvenirs for our family and friends. We then got back on the coach for our two hour journey back to camp; many of us sleeping the whole way! In the evening was the closing ceremony. It included the winners of each night's talent show, zumba and some campfire singing. It was a great final evening with music and a disco too!

Day 8, we got a bit more of a lie in on the final day but then had to pack. After packing we took down our tents, said our goodbyes and then headed for Belfast City Airport. We arrived back in London Gatwick at approximately 7pm.

I think everyone will agree it was a trip never to be forgotten and we have created many great memories that we will never forget!