

My trip to Canada

During the summer I had the most amazing experience of going to Canada with the Guides. 3 leaders, 11 guides and myself went away to Nova Scotia. For two days we stayed in a youth hostel and did some sightseeing in Halifax while the other 12 were spent at an International Camp in the Musquodoboit Valley "The NS (Nova Scotia) Heritage Explosion 2011".

We started our trip by meeting at Heathrow Airport on Tuesday 9th August 2011 at 8.45 am. Before going off to the Air Canada check in desk, we said our final goodbyes to our parents, some of whom were looking forward to going on holiday without us! My parents went off to Turkey. For me going on a plane was not a problem but for one of the girls in my group it was her first time on a plane which was a whole new experience for her. The 6 hours (and 7 minutes) journey on the plane held a mix of emotions within our group. Some were nervous while others were full of enthusiasm; there was a whole mixture.

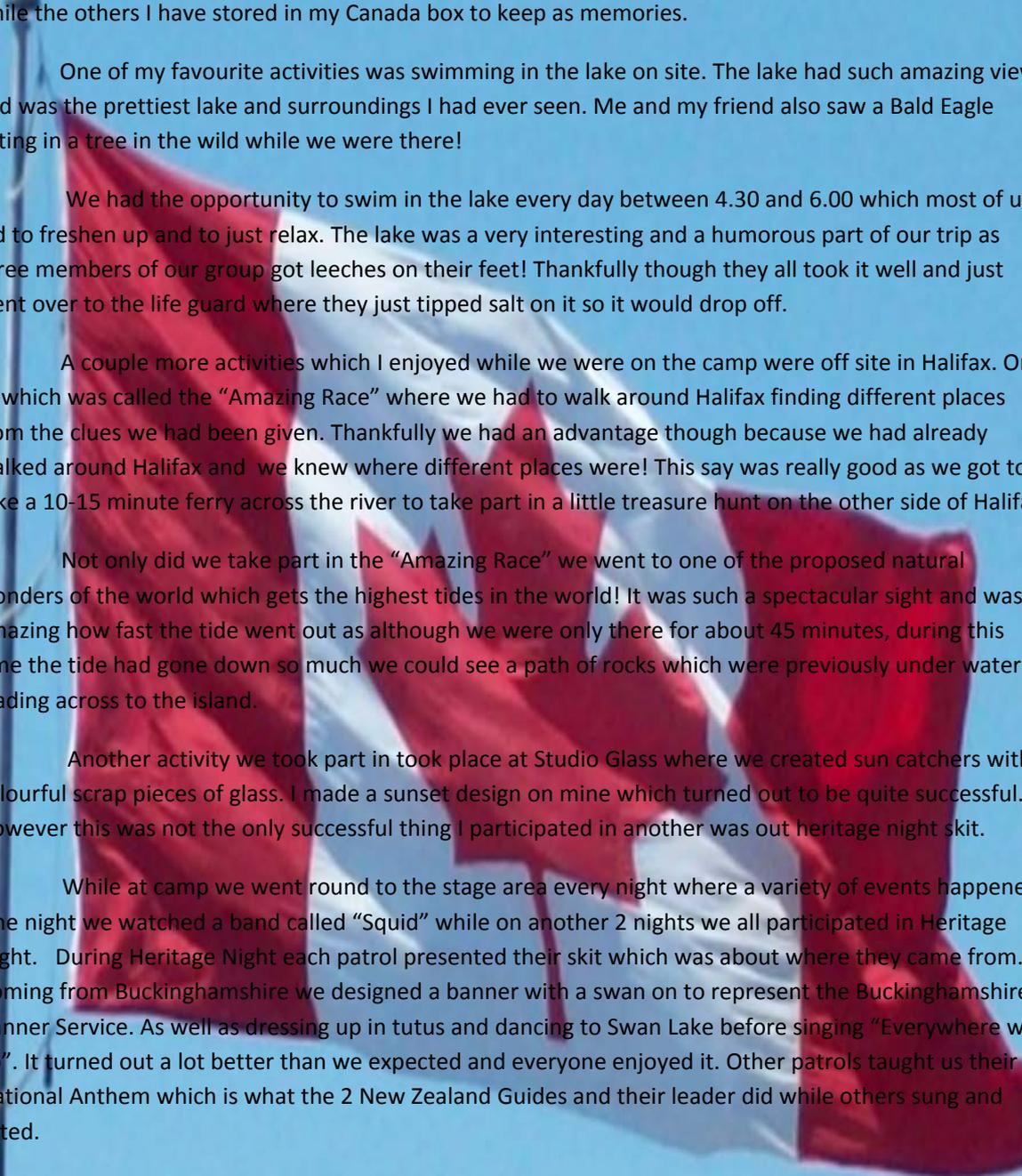
When we arrived at the other end, at Halifax airport, we were all anxious to find our bags on the carousel (thankfully we all did). We then went off in 3 different taxis to our Youth Hostel in Barrington Street which was in the centre of Halifax. On the same day we visited a local supermarket which was quite a fun experience comparing products we have in England to the ones in Canada. While we were there we bought Pizza for dinner and pancake mixture for breakfast.

The following day was a lot of fun; we walked down to the harbour where we went on a two and a half hour long Whale Watching trip! It was so exciting looking out for all the whales as we went along. Unfortunately, we didn't spot any. However we did see seagulls and we fed them by throwing bread up to them! If that's any compensation! In addition we got to hold a lobster which was really good fun, it had a surprisingly slimy surface compared to what I expected it to have. We then proceeded off to a Café "Tim Hortons", where we ate our lunch before going to Pier 21 an immigration museum which was really interesting and we all learnt a lot.

Another good event we went to was the Busking Festival it took place all along the harbour and was going to be there for about a month. Whilst we were there we saw some amazing acts one of which could fit his whole body through a squash racket as well as juggle a chain saw and fire while standing 3-4 metres up on a thin platform. It must have taken soooooo much practise. In the evening we went to a restaurant called "Salty's" where I ate the most mouth-watering haddock and chips I had ever tasted. This is probably because Halifax is a large fishing port. Unfortunately though when we left the restaurant the heavens opened which meant we had to put on all our water proof gear- at least it meant we used them!

The following day we went to the Citadel where we got to watch powder being fired out of a real canon. It was amazing to watch and really loud. We also saw the changing of guards who swapped every 1 hour and were only allowed to walk forward and backwards 7 times in the whole hour! Once we finished at the Citadel we experienced a Canadian Subway for lunch before returning to the Youth Hostel to grab our bags and go off to the train station where we were catching a bus to the campsite.

During the camp we slept in 3 tents, each with 4 guides in. I slept with Laura, Bethany and Ellie P. We all got along really well and had such a good time with each other taking part in lots of activities such as canoeing, an obstacle course we created, archery, crafts, paper making, archaeological dig, fire making, rope bridge and building our own catapults from which we launched wet sponges from. All these activities we did, we did with two other patrols which gave us the opportunity to meet other guides who



were also at the camp. This opportunity to mix with others gave us a chance to make lots of swaps with other guides. While I was there I swapped 109 swaps which ranged from cloth badges, pin badges and crafts people had hand made themselves. I have now sewn the cloth badges on to my camp blanket while the others I have stored in my Canada box to keep as memories.

One of my favourite activities was swimming in the lake on site. The lake had such amazing views and was the prettiest lake and surroundings I had ever seen. Me and my friend also saw a Bald Eagle sitting in a tree in the wild while we were there!

We had the opportunity to swim in the lake every day between 4.30 and 6.00 which most of us did to freshen up and to just relax. The lake was a very interesting and a humorous part of our trip as three members of our group got leeches on their feet! Thankfully though they all took it well and just went over to the life guard where they just tipped salt on it so it would drop off.

A couple more activities which I enjoyed while we were on the camp were off site in Halifax. One of which was called the “Amazing Race” where we had to walk around Halifax finding different places from the clues we had been given. Thankfully we had an advantage though because we had already walked around Halifax and we knew where different places were! This say was really good as we got to take a 10-15 minute ferry across the river to take part in a little treasure hunt on the other side of Halifax.

Not only did we take part in the “Amazing Race” we went to one of the proposed natural wonders of the world which gets the highest tides in the world! It was such a spectacular sight and was amazing how fast the tide went out as although we were only there for about 45 minutes, during this time the tide had gone down so much we could see a path of rocks which were previously under water leading across to the island.

Another activity we took part in took place at Studio Glass where we created sun catchers with colourful scrap pieces of glass. I made a sunset design on mine which turned out to be quite successful. However this was not the only successful thing I participated in another was our heritage night skit.

While at camp we went round to the stage area every night where a variety of events happened. One night we watched a band called “Squid” while on another 2 nights we all participated in Heritage Night. During Heritage Night each patrol presented their skit which was about where they came from. Coming from Buckinghamshire we designed a banner with a swan on to represent the Buckinghamshire Banner Service. As well as dressing up in tutus and dancing to Swan Lake before singing “Everywhere we go”. It turned out a lot better than we expected and everyone enjoyed it. Other patrols taught us their National Anthem which is what the 2 New Zealand Guides and their leader did while others sung and acted.

The camp consisted of about 250 participants plus all the staff. As a result of not having too many it meant we got a chance to speak to more of the other campers who we may not have spoken to if there were too many more. Our camp was also catered for which was really nice as it meant we had our meals cooked for us and we got to sit with everyone. Our meals were really tasty too.

Overall I had an amazing time on my trip and have got lots of memories I will keep with me forever. Whether they are to do with the friends I have made or the activities I took part in.

By Emma Smith Age 14

