

This summer, I was lucky enough to attend the 22nd World Scout Jamboree at Rinkaby in Sweden. There were almost 2 years building up to this event, but it was definitely worth the wait! My journey to the jamboree began when I attended an international selection weekend and was lucky enough to be offered a place with the Bucks Guides going to the jamboree with Essex Scouts. There then followed several “getting to know each other” weekends with planning and preparation for the jamboree itself. An Abba theme was chosen and I became part of the Waterloo unit.

Before the Jamboree began, the whole UK contingent of 4,000 people, spent 2 days in Copenhagen. All of us went on a speed boat trip and attended the pre-event party where Alphabeat performed live. I am not quite sure what Copenhagen made of having so many Scouts and guides roaming the city!

Next was the big event – the Jamboree itself, from 27th July – 8th August! This made the Copenhagen crowd look tiny - there were over 40,000 scouts from 143 countries. Once at the Jamboree we were directed to our site on “Autumn” and pitched the main dining tent, which was an odd octopus like structure, and our personal tents. There were 4 “towns” named after the seasons, each with 6 sub camps. There were also shops, bank post office and a hospital.

Over the Jamboree we attended three ceremonies: the opening, mid and closing. Each one was very different. The opening was focused on parading the flags from every country and the Jamboree theme of simply scouting. Bear Grylls, the chief scout in the UK, abseiled from the top of the stage to hand the Jamboree over to Sweden. The mid ceremony had live performances from some BMX cyclists and a motor bike stunts man. The closing ceremony was focused on the global theme and handing over to Japan for 2015. Europe performed live and it was all very exciting (despite the heavy downpours!)

There were 6 modular activities for us all to participate in during the camp, to help us develop skills and knowledge for today’s world. These were: quest, earth, people, global development village, dream and camp-in-camp. All apart from camp-in-camp were on site activities. Camp-in-camp was a chance to experience traditional Swedish style camping. All were near the sea, a lake or a river; mine was near a lake. I was lucky enough to go swimming and rafting in a supposedly small lake, even though it was called Long Laken (meaning long lake).

During the jamboree I met young people from all over the world. We shared meals, fun and ideas and ended our time together with the jamboree song “Changing the World” and a fantastic fireworks display.

After the Jamboree our unit partook in Home Hospitality (HoHo). We had 5 days in Slovakia. It was a chance to experience typical Slovakian lifestyle. I went to Trnava, with 10 others from our unit. The rest of the unit were in Bratislava. The weather was not great, and the Slovaks do not like the rain. One day my friend and I were standing at the train station in shorts and a t-shirt and our host was next to us with trousers and a waterproof coat on saying “It’s raining! It’s raining!” We didn’t think so!

One of my favourite experiences was during HoHo – it was Prepat, real life traditional “capture the flag”. It happened in the middle of the night in a wood where a Slovakian scout campsite was. We had to try and take their flag and not get caught. Unfortunately, the 6 six of us doing it were unsuccessful and we all ended up being tied up. British health and safety enforcers would have a fit! We also took part in a community service

project back in Bratislava. We helped at a local primary school, doing weeding, some painting and clearing some rubbish.

If you have the chance to go on an international trip, go for it! I had a fantastic time, made great friends and it truly was a once in a lifetime experience, which I will always remember! Thankyou once again to everyone who made it possible.