

World Scout Jamboree 2011 Report- Ellen Rogan

During the summer of 2011 I had the best time of my life going to the World Scout Jamboree (WSJ) in Sweden. The whole adventure lasted for 18 days and nights, but there were also so many memories for the many training camps building up to the trip. It all started when I was chosen from a selection weekend to go the WSJ and then from there I was put into the 'District Line Unit' made up of 9 guides, 4 leaders and 27 scouts. The guides and one leader were from Buckinghamshire and the others were from South London.

So before we went to Sweden, our unit, along with the whole of the UK contingent (4,000 people!) went to Denmark. I had a fantastic time walking round Copenhagen, going to Tivoli Gardens, going power boating, taking part in a Zumba class, playing basketball, staying in a hostel full of UK Scouts and just getting a taste of what the actual jamboree was going to be like. But it has to be said the highlight of Denmark for me was the UK Contingent party, which was a massive party with live performers like 'Alphabeat' and cover bands like 'Kings Ov Leon'. It was in a fantastic venue, with various street performers outside and great music! We then left for Sweden with an early start, even though we were so excited to get to Sweden we all managed to fall asleep on the coach.

When we arrived to the campsite, it just seemed like huge fields with the odd tent and toilet block popped up around, but as the day progressed and we sat up our camp the whole campsite started to come together. My unit was in the Autumn town and in Kivik subcamp. One of the highlights of my trip was during the opening ceremony when each country that was participating, their contingent would stand up and cheer and from this I realised a Maltese unit were sitting in front of us. My best friend from my old school, Emma had moved to Malta 5 years ago and we'd been keeping in touch via facebook and that's how I knew she was going to the Jamboree. At the end of the opening ceremony I went over and asked if they knew someone called Emma Schembri and they said yes I'll just get her. So I got to see my friend who I hadn't seen in 5 years which just really shows the guiding and scouting movements really bring people together. It is hard to explain how fantastic the Jamboree was, the atmosphere and the friendliness of people was overwhelming. I made so many friends through the jamboree and got to meet so many new people from all over the world and was able to experience their cultures and traditions. During the course of the jamboree we did various activities with our patrols everyday which were ranging from meditating to creating our own culture. Everything we did was adventure, from going to the showers to having to go shopping for food. I loved having to eat dinner with another patrol from another country and 2 other countries at their camp, it was an opportunity to get to know some people really well. The opening ceremony, culture day ceremony and the closing ceremony were all spectacles! I have never seen so many people in one area in my life! The music and entertainment was fantastic and the atmosphere was ecstatic. We were all so sad to leave the jamboree, we really didn't want to go, but we realised it wasn't over yet! We still were going to Poland!

After a bumpy ride across the Baltic Sea we arrived in Poland where we were all taking part in a Ho-Ho, home hospitality and we all stayed in some local Polish scouts houses. Whilst there we did various activities from exploring the town, rock climbing, bike riding, hiking, water skiing and just generally experiencing the Polish culture. I really enjoyed the time we had in Poland and I am still in touch with the Polish scout I stayed with. The Ho-ho was a good opportunity to reflect upon the amazing time we had at the jamboree whilst preparing ourselves to go home. Overall I think going to

the WSJ was the best experience of my life and would recommend it to anyone, but if I hadn't gone to that selection weekend and been picked and then had all the help and support I needed to raise the money, it wouldn't have happened.