



*Most of the crew waiting for the minibuses (and Ben, Eloise and Alice)*

At last, ITTH – Kings Langley and Bovington Scouts were in great spirits and ready for their adventure. Bags were chucked in the trailer and off we went stopping at a motorway services for more sweets and drinks as we'd been going an hour at least and had eaten everything.

The weather: – theme of all great British conversations. Yes, it did stop raining, yes it did snow during flag down, yes there was frost on the ground in the tent village. (Just thought I'd get that over with).



It was just dark when we arrived and we had hot drinks and biscuits. We all began to collect our possessions and got very confused about which way the field was and who was sleeping where. Max couldn't find his sleeping bag (which was actually meant to be in his

bag as it said on the kit list) but alas he had packed it separately. We all began thinking up creative ways he could keep warm at night when luckily he found it, the last thing off the trailer. After this panicky moment we got shown to our rooms. Yes, we were in the tent village above and behind Orchard Farm.

As we hadn't done much exploring it was a little strange to be woken by a siren at about 3am – what should we do? What did it mean? What was that strange mechanical sound chugging away all night? We found the answer in the morning – a huge cement works was our nearest neighbour which nobody had bothered to tell us about. So that's why the scouts could smell smoke and thought Charlie had tried to set fire to something!! The delightful smokey pollution did seem to keep things a little warmer though...



On Saturday morning, after “the full English” we were packed off with hot and cold drinks and lunch in our backpacks to go cycling and climbing for the day with other groups doing the same or hiking. Sadly I can't report on all the action as I was just with Team 7 for the day. Despite many requests and offers of bribes, nobody has confessed to me anything that can be published from their own teams

*Where is one's fresh orange juice?*

Team 7 was myself, Katie, Ben S and three members of the Ware Scout Troup; Christian, Robbo and Faye who was the youngest person at ITTH aged 10.

Cycling – We were kitted out with crash hats and bikes at the cycle centre and set off with a leader, mostly along disused railway line so that told me it was going to be flat. However, we did turn away from the railway and onto a more “challenging” section where most of us decided to try our walking



*Team 7 after their cycling*

skills out. We carried on in true Scouting style through the hailstones and back to the cycle centre for lunch. In another group slightly more interesting things were happening, in the style of April (one of the Guides) attempting to do a point-at-the-cow-whilst-riding-a-bike trick, falling off and finishing off almost in a bush...

Climbing – After lunch we hopped on a minibus to the climbing area where we were told to partner up with someone vaguely the same size so that optimum climbing



and abseiling weight distribution had some hope of saviour in case of catastrophe. I partnered up with Katie and harnessed up for the climb ahead. Katie decided that 3cm altitude was enough height for her on the rock-face, finished her climb and de-roped so I paired up with a very small scout indeed. I climbed until my hands were so numb from the cold I couldn't feel them and decided it was time to turn around so slowly abseiled my way down. As a jaunty little finish, now obviously an

expert, I thought I would jump the last few feet but alas hadn't warned the small scout who went flying upwards and was left suspended in mid-air with a scout leader clinging on. I climbed back up the rocks to lower the poor boy down again and everything was sorted! Faye turned out to be our highest climber (small and light!).



After climbing a few of us had a bit of time to do some rock scrambling up to a triangulation point to go check the view.

After a hearty dinner of pasta bolognese there was the choice of watching a film or just getting into mischief so of course, most of 1<sup>st</sup> Kings Langley opted for the second choice and checked out the Orchard Farm buildings in detail before going to bed.

Sunday and another great breakfast before our day hike. The two hiking teams for the day were set off in opposite directions with a map to follow in a huge loop. We managed to meet half way round for lunch where Katie



insisted we had our picnic in a sheep field rather than

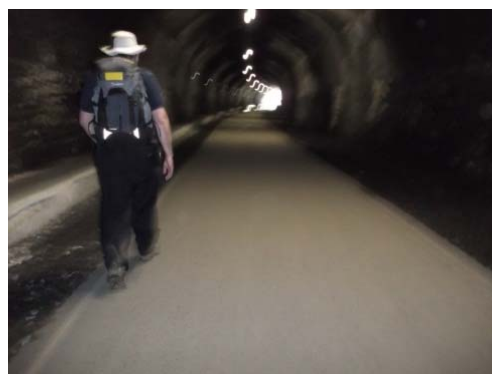


in a cow field – I thought it was the pancake v pellets poo issue but it turns out she was afraid of being gored by a bull so we dined amongst the sheep pellets. There was some fantastic scenery, rivers and views on the way.



After this we took a minor detour (mostly because the route we were meant to take was up a big hill) into an interesting disused railway tunnel through a rock face where some members of our team were a little worried about passing trains, despite the track being removed years ago. Then we turned up off the track and eventually dropped down

to join the side of a river.



!

Dinner was yummy chicken, vegetables and mash and then we gathered for the “Tim and Eric show”. Tim dressed up in formal evening attire, Eric just wore a bow-tie and a piece of kitchen roll and they both went through a rendition of jokes and sketches, the funniest being either Eric, playing Bohemian Rhapsody very tunefully on a set



of rubber chickens (which



we all sang to) or crocodile wrestling. Robert being the tallest scout in attendance was the crocodile and he was wrestled by a very tiny guide. I'll leave that one to your imagination – a very funny evening and we all had a great laugh.

*Here's Robert the crocodile  
– spot the wrestler!*

Monday dawned – our last day. Katie had taken her Scouts 'Be Prepared' motto very seriously and had packed up all her stuff bright and early ready for the journey home before we even bothered to get up. There wasn't much else to pack anyway as we had been excellent with conserving clean clothes to save on the washing when we got home.



*Dear Maurice's mum – here  
is proof Maurice has  
domestic skills.*

This was Team 7's orienteering day so after our traditional cooked breakfast we set off, full of confidence at our map reading skills following the day hike and immediately got lost before we even left the car park and completely overshot the first point. OK, so the map scales were hugely different today and 20 footsteps got you half way across the map rather than half a centimetre like when we were hiking. We were soon back on track though after one of the leaders pointed out our error. Then we realised that just regular walking was just not going to be good enough for some of the descents in the hilly terrain so our leader suggested that we tried 'Controlled Sliding'. Christian only heard him say 'sliding'.... ...You can see where this is going. Let's just say all we saw was a large landslide of mud and leaves followed by a muffled thud. ☺

We returned to Orchard Farm for lunch before getting back on the minibuses for home. Alice was awarded the 'Most Helpful Person at Camp' t-shirt (which she may grow into one day). I think it was for carrying on washing up whilst having an asthma attack but she assures me it was for far more than that.



## **Tent Village Tales...**

- It was noticed that Maurice was a little disturbed each morning – he talked about having a strange dream about giant carrots and he was sure he'd actually seen one in his tent, asleep, right near to him. Then we realised – it was Robert who slumbers gently on his back, dead straight in his bright orange sleeping bag.



- On Saturday night, it being Olympic year, Maurice decided to trial a new Olympic event :- 'round the field sleeping-bag jumping'. He did take the precaution of placing a bin liner around the bottom of his sleeping bag but this failed completely and then Robert decided enough was enough and just knocked him over anyway.



The second Olympic event was 'cramming scouts in a small tent'. It wasn't clear if it was the fresher air, mood lighting, snacks or just pure ambience, but the girl Scout tent was the happening place each night. The

record was 15 scouts in a 5 man tent but then the event was deemed inappropriate by a leader who failed to explain why and we assumed our team was disqualified.



*No, not Alice's knickers but the King's Langley Scarf, proudly strung up in the girls tent!*

- Our final new Olympic event was a throwing event involving 'The Hat Tree'. This was an on-going event where anyone could steal a hat from a head or tent, throw it as high as possible into a specified tree and then watch the owner retrieve it by climbing the tree. Whilst they were doing this it was permissible to throw sticks and clods of earth at them or just try pulling them down. Simple.... The game was stopped by Monday as it was clear that removing hats wasn't a good idea with the standard of scout hygiene.



- The Scout leaders obviously weren't aware of the settling down to sleep time for scouts of about 1.30am and popped over to Charlie's tent to gently remind them it was time for sleepies. Unfortunately scouts only have the memory of a goldfish

for such things and started to make a racket again. The Scout Leader popped back to that tent for some slightly stronger words which all the tent village heard and then turned away back to his own tent allegedly falling heavily over a guy rope. They're such good fun the leaders, always ready with a joke and a laugh.



## The Differences Between Guides and Scouts:

**Guide bedtime:** 8.30pm

**Scout bedtime:** 1.30am

**Guide eating habits:** Pick this, leave that, don't try anything you don't like the look of, look distressed, place knife and fork over remains of meal.

**Scout eating habits:** Eat anything you see that it vaguely edible at any time. (This can be stolen from other plates, the floor, back of the minibus, the path in the woods etc).



*'o the*

**Scouts like:** Throwing twigs and stones at dormitory windows.

**Guides do not like:** Having twigs and stones thrown at dormitory windows.

**Guides:** Wash and shower as much as possible, use deodorants, perfumes and hairbrushes.

**Scouts:** Just add an extra layer of clothes when they start to smell.

**Guide treatment for grazed leg:** Retire to bedroom, open large surgical kit, bathe and dress wound in bandage, wrap further bandage round leg, elevate leg, eat chocolate, look sad.

**Scout treatment for grazed leg:** Spit on graze, rub with dirty hand, move on.

**Guide dress code:** Spend an hour laying out clothing and debating what outfit to wear dependent on mood, weather, friend's attire etc.

**Scout dress code:** Same as last night, yesterday, the night before and the day before that – why take it off when you only have to put it on again in the morning???



**Guide bedroom:**

80°C

**Scout bedroom: -**

4°C



## In Conclusion

ITTH is the business. Great to be fed, occupied, challenged and entertained so well! (And none of our own leaders were there who know us far too well to keep their eagle eyes on us). Cool scarf and badge, they've been worn to death already – great for the exclusive "senior scout" look. Thanks to Barney and all of his team!

## Roll on GTKTHABMI !!!

(That's the '*Get to Know the Hills A Bit More Intimately*' trip to those who don't know.)

Kerry



Photos from our resident Troup Photographer Alice  
With additional contributions from Kerry.

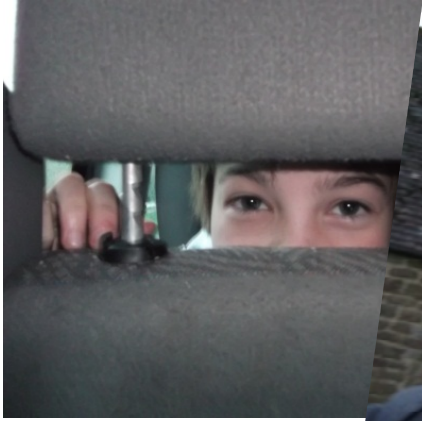






*There's a story here but it's censored...*





*Pirate Max wears his scarf with pride.*