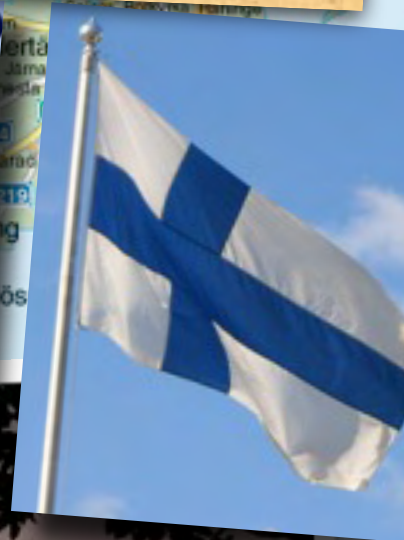
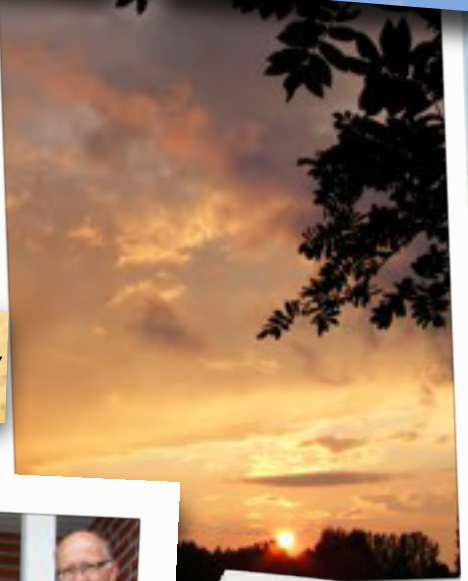


World Scout Jamboree Trip

23 July to 11 August 2011



thumbs up!



gorgeous
sunset

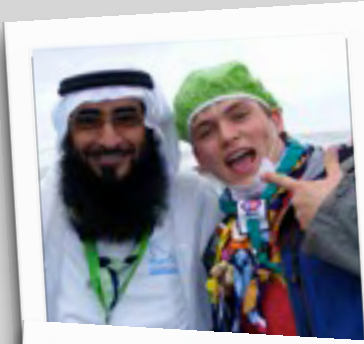


Me, Alec, and our
Finnish HoHo family



© Eric Hampusgård/Scouterna/Scouterna

Foreword



This diary is, primarily, for my own purposes. The fact it's so long doesn't bother me because each and every word means a lot to me, and I'm sure will mean even more in years and decades to come. For that reason, I have not tried to edit the words that I wrote when I was, quite literally, out in the field, but have enhanced them with the addition of images. In total, I took 1,050 photographs over the 20 days, but clearly they couldn't all be included, so choosing the best ones has been one of the biggest challenges.



As I said earlier, this is primarily a record for myself of the adventure of my lifetime. However, given the number of people who in some way supported my trip (whether that be by buying my Christmas Quiz for £2, or giving Maidenhead District attendees like myself a pitch at Scout summer fairs across the town), it seemed only right that I could make at least a small part of my experience available to them, in the form of this diary. For that reason, I've made the whole thing available to read, in full and for free, on my blog – this has a certain sense of completeness to it, as I blogged each stage of the run-up to the Jamboree.



So then, at last, the diary of my Jamboree experience. Just as I was inspired by the tales told by my friend Nat Pickett after he attended the 2007 Jamboree, I hope that someone may be inspired by the stories I have to share too, and if this diary can serve as a means to communicate them, so much the better!



Andrew Burdett
August 2011

TIMELINE TO THE JAMBOREE



December 2009
Initial Berkshire Unit application form submitted.



January 2010
Invited to attend the selection camp.



March 2010
Selection camp held; attended by 150 hopefuls.



March 2010
One of 36 Berkshire places awarded to me.



April 2010
First training camp held.



June 2010
Bag-packing fundraiser at Sainsbury's Maidenhead.



June 2010
Soaked in the stocks at a summer fair to fundraise.



September 2010
Covered in mud during a training camp in Wales.



September 2010
Running with fellow local Jamboreers in the Lions Club fund-run



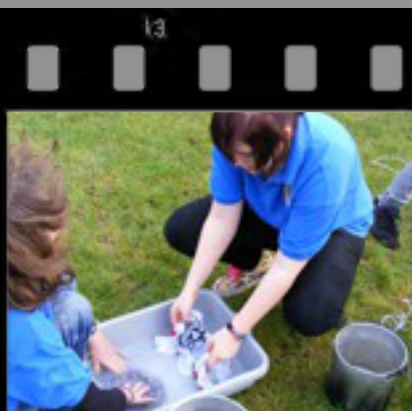
October 2010
Walking the Rotary Club Boundary Walk with fellow local Jamboreers.



October 2010
Pioneering training day held.



November 2010
Bag-packing fundraiser at Homebase Maidenhead.



January 2011
Clothes-washing training day.



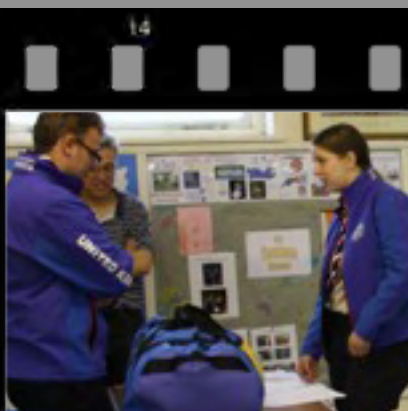
March 2011
Training camp held, centred around teamwork.



April 2011
Fourth training camp held.



June 2011
Final training camp held, where sausage stew was cooked for 40.



July 2011
Final kit inspection.



July 2011
Berkshire Jamboree Unit members set off for the adventure of their lives.

Saturday, 23 July 2011

Day One



After a week of packing, unpacking, repacking, weighing, taking stuff out, and reweighing, I finally gritted my teeth as I pulled the zip tight on my holdall on Saturday afternoon. Then, Matthew drove me to 3rd Upton Scout Hut (Mum and Dad were on a special silver wedding anniversary trip to Peru), and helped me to unload my kit.

In arriving at 7:00pm, I was one of the first to arrive, but soon the rest of the Berkshire Jamboree Unit members also turned up. Whilst talking to them and doing a last passport double-check, I began the slow and laborious process of deleting large amounts of footage off my video camera, freeing space for the three weeks of filming ahead. It's something I'd meant to do at home in the week preceding our departure, but, in all the excitement (or rather franticness), I forgot. Calmly, I wasn't the only one to have forgotten stuff: my friend and fellow Maidenhead



attendee James Ashe (who'd been involved with a large amount of the fundraising activities that the seven of us Maidenhead and Cookham participants had organised) had left his hat at home, lost his limited-edition UK Contingent woggle, and had a feeling he hadn't packed any underwear. Evidently, not a great start for the supposedly 'cream-of-the-crop' of Berkshire Scouts. Nevertheless, we were still able to enjoy the evening, especially when Richard brought out an electric-shocker game, which proved to be great fun.



At 11:30pm, after a delicious hot sausage sandwich and slice of cake, we lay down on the Scout hut floor for our last sleep on British soil for weeks. As one may expect, the nervous excitement prevented most of us from getting as good a sleep as we perhaps needed, but it was a tremendous atmosphere all the same.

Sunday, 24 July 2011

Day Two

We were woken at 2:30am, giving us just enough time to tidy away the 'spare' sleeping bags we'd brought specifically for the night (all three hours of it), and to carry our bags to the coach, which arrived at 3:00am.

A short drive later, and we were at the drop-off lay-by at Terminal 5.

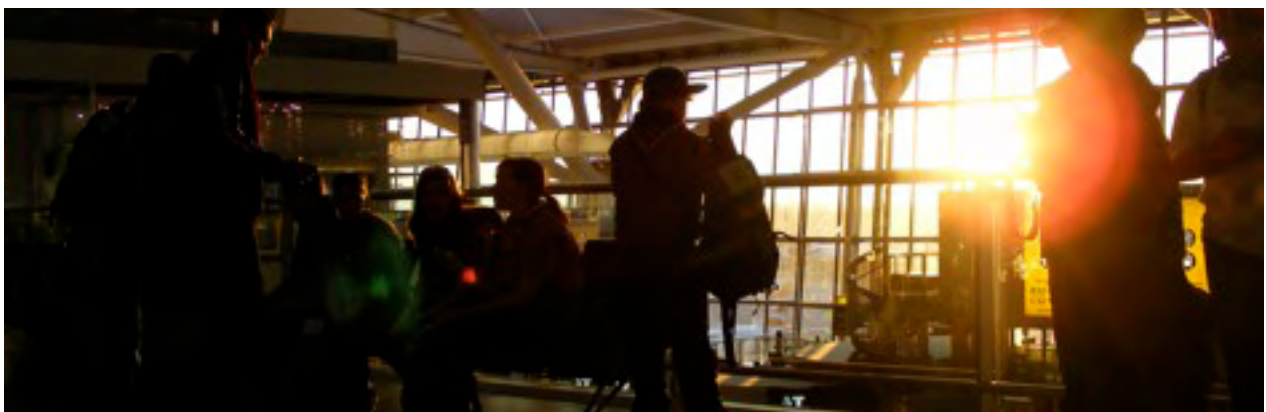
There was an eerie atmosphere inside;

every light was on but every shop roller-door was closed, every advertising screen was illuminated but only the cleaners were at work. We used the quiet scene as a backdrop for a few group photos, as our uniforms were "only going to get more scruffy", to quote Unit Leader Simon Pickett. Then, we passed the time with card-games and attempts to walk up the huge down-escalator.



Eventually, security opened, and we passed through it fairly quickly. We then had just over half an hour to look through the airside shops, before making our way to the shuttle train. The train sped us to the departure gate and then, within minutes, we were boarding the plane.

It was as we flew out over London that I began to wonder how many air-miles the UK organisers must have racked up in buying 4,500 flights to Denmark. Somebody else reasoned that they probably deserved every one of them.



We arrived in Copenhagen at 9:00am, and on collecting our luggage, we piled onto a coach that took us to the seaside. En-route, a video was played with messages of support from former Scouts including David Attenborough, Richard Hammond, and Bear Grylls. Sadly, despite the glorious golden sunshine in London, grey clouds loomed over Denmark. At first, the rain that followed only dampened our clothing (not a problem, as we were splashing around in sea kayaks and canoes anyway). When we got out, though, our spirits were dampened too, and people became restless. This was a real shame, as should the weather have been better, the day on the beach would have been great, and one felt a great sense of pity for the organisers. After a less-than-delicious and hardly filling packed lunch (supplied by our accommodation), we set off earlier-than-scheduled for the hostel. We were the first UK unit to arrive there (the other 87 units would descend on Denmark's capital city over the next 24 hours), but quickly settled in.



Naturally tired from the late night, early morning, and travelling, I decided to have a nap in the couple of hours of free-time, but some others enjoyed a brief trip to the nearby Copenhagen Museum.



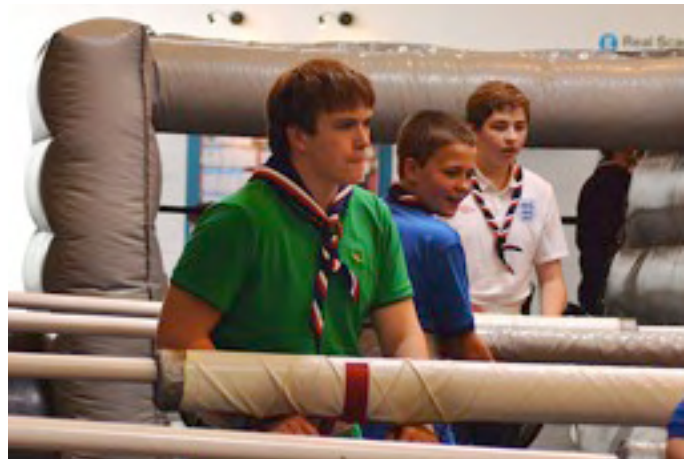
In the evening, the few hundred UK Scouts who'd arrived in Denmark over the course of the day walked to the city's giant sports complex. There, a disco was held with ample pizza and loud music, prompting most of the young people to get up and dance. It certainly reaffirmed positive feelings about the Jamboree experience, which had been put at risk earlier in the day, meaning everyone went to bed on a high.

Monday, 25 July 2011

Day Three



Breakfast awaited our awakening, coming in the form of bread rolls, cheese, and ham, left outside the dormitories in polystyrene boxes. Once we'd eaten, everyone headed to the sports centre again, where we all participated in various sports, which we picked at random from a hat. The ones that I did were Zumba and Human Football, though — on the contrary to what I first thought — the former was not rolling down a hill in a semi-transparent ball (that's 'Zorbing'). Instead, it was a form of fitness class. On the whole, the majority of the other Zumba-ers were female, who'd obviously swapped their choices with others, but I had male company in the form of my fellow Berkshire Jamboreer, Iain. Strangely, he seemed to be rather good at it, but I just couldn't take it seriously, so decided to try and escape. After walking around the leisure centre some time, I eventually found a lavatory. Without going into too much detail, I sort of, well, broke it, so hastily returned to the Zumba session on the other side of the building, which was just finishing. As Iain was walking out, he told me just how much I'd missed in the second half, as the instructor's tightly-fitting clothing ripped after she bent over in apparently suggestive fashions. Human Football was much more fun, with all of us strapped to a bar like table-football players, only able to move sideways to shoot.



Simon Pickett

Lunch was identical to the previous day's, though even less enjoyable for me, as I'd unpacked the contents of the bulky plastic container into my day-sack. This resulted in the "mucus-sauce-filled" sandwiches (as leader Jim Payen said) disintegrating in my bag. Fortunately they were in their own compartment, saving the rest of my possessions from 'getting creamed'.



In the afternoon, we travelled by train to the harbour, where the UK organisers had laid on trips on the fastest speedboats in Scandinavia,

worth an astonishing €100,000 each. They advised not to take cameras, but ever prepared to shoot in the most hostile of conditions, I brought my video camera with me. Even though I didn't have its special waterproof housing, I felt confident that, even at great speeds, I'd be able to hold on to it. That was until our driver told us about the procedure to follow should the boat flip. But it was too late, we were off, and once we'd left the safe confines of the harbour walls, the three boats raced. Amazingly, what was by no means a smooth ride created very little splash.

After our trip, the leaders bought everyone an ice-cream out of the spare funds we'd raised, and then we made our way back to the station.

Once we got back, we went straight to Tivoli Gardens, a theme-park very near to our hostel. The queues were very long, partly due to the presence of most of the other UK Scouts, and partly due to the fact that the rides seemed to be only capable of carrying eight people at a time.



Fortunately, going round with a large number of other Berkshire Jamboreers (or 'Royals', to give us our less formal nickname) made the time pass quickly, and we were entertained by magic tricks performed by another UK participant. My favourite ride was a chair-o-plane one, where riders (secured only by a lap-bar) are hoisted 80 metres up in the air, and then spun. It gave us all a great view of the entire city, which surrounds Tivoli Gardens on all sides.

Burgers from the park restaurant were our dinner, as we were each given a token with which we could trade for one meal. However, as it was a serve-yourself system, we very generously helped ourselves to great slabs of meat, and smuggled extra bread rolls out in our pockets.

We stayed until the park closed at 11:00pm, then headed back to the hostel to go to bed.

Tuesday, 26 July 2011

Day Four

Once again, we woke up to find breakfast boxes outside, and then, after showering and dressing, we all congregated outside. With no activities planned until the party in the evening, the day was free for us to explore Copenhagen.

For many of us, our first stop was the delicatessen, where we each bought a Danish pastry.

Amid the many retail spaces was a Lego shop, which someone described as "the Apple Store of Lego". They were right: there were areas of the shop-floor designated for visitors to play with the products, beautiful displays of the products, and many casually-dressed assistants. What it lacked was the likes of a 'Genius Bar', for fanatics to get help from specialists in common problems facing model-makers (like how to make a sphere out of the bricks).

Once I'd bought my 22-year-old brother, Matthew, a small set as a souvenir, I met up with Andrew Mott. Together we decided to pay the quite expensive fee for a rickshaw ride through a small backbone of Copenhagen.



Worryingly, our rider spent more time looking at, and talking to, us than he did concentrating on the road. Then, slaloming traffic and pedestrians in the seemingly dangerous streets, he told us he was in fact slightly drunk. That might explain why he was so laid-back about Motty's suggestion that he rode the bike around the square.



A number of near-calamities later, and we were back on our feet. As we walked back up the main shopping street, we came across a large number of foreign Scouts also staying in Copenhagen, and after joining in with one of their chants, we taught them one of our own.



I took time out from the noisy streets to visit the beautiful Church of Our Saviour, and I was blown away by the sight of the organ. We later discovered that there are 4,000 pipes in it, and parts of it date back to the year 1700.

At 1:00pm, we found our way back to the rendezvous at the main square, where we met up with our leaders. Then, we were given another couple of hours to explore.

I came across a couple of busking ukulele-players and asked very nicely if I could sing along with them to The Beatles' *I've Just Seen A Face*. They were, at first, a little reluctant, but when I started singing anyway, they changed their minds. It was

really great fun, and it drew in such a crowd that their takings increased hugely.

At 3:00pm, the whole unit met up once more, and headed back to the hostel to get changed. Then, at 5:30pm, we congregated downstairs for the UK Contingent send-off party.



En-mass, the thousands of us walked to the venue, a disused warehouse fifteen minutes away from Danhostel. It'd been decorated beautifully, with a large banner, an archway of Union Flag-coloured balloons, and even a red carpet outside the gate. Inside, a stage where various bands performed throughout the night. Sadly, the



warm-up act was the world's worst magician, who failed to entertain the crowds (primarily, though, due to a lack of sight-lines from 'the pit', so I likened his tricks to "optical illusions on the radio"). hilariously, though, every time his glamorous assistant appeared — even in the wings — we all applauded wildly. It got to the stage where, by means of keeping the last bit of the crowd's attention, the magician asked "Are you enjoying yourselves?", to which everyone replied unenthusiastically "No". Happily, the music was great, and we entertained by tribute bands The Kings Ov [sic] Leon and The Kaiser Monkey Killers. Much to everybody's delight, Alphabeat were there too, entertaining everyone with their hit *Fascination*.



In addition to the self-service barbecue, we'd all been given three drink tokens, each exchangeable for one of the 15,000 cans of Pepsi, 7Up, and fizzy orange. However, all of the dancing and raving soon made me, especially, thirsty. I therefore decided to come up with a dastardly plot to steal an extra can, but in doing so attracted the unwanted attention of one of the helpers. When she asked for my ticket, though, I saw a unmarked one in the waste-paper bin, so subtly grabbed it and presented it to her, and went off with drink in hand.

The party was really great fun, but as it finished at midnight, we got very little sleep ahead of the following day's early start.

Wednesday, 27 July 2011

Day Five



Wednesday began with an early start as the thousand young people in Danhostel (as well as the other participants in different hostels across Denmark) packed our final items of kit into the holdalls, and then waited to have the rooms OK-ed for tidiness. Then, each floor was emptied of Scouts and luggage, and each unit re-met outside. It was actually a pretty impressive

sight, seeing so many uniformly-dressed young people standing next to neat rows of identical bags. Once we'd all returned our room swipe-keys and been checked-off, each unit walked (carrying all their kit) the half-mile distance to Copenhagen's industrial estate. There, we awaited the arrival of the coaches, which would take us to the site of the Jamboree in Rinkaby, Sweden.

Whilst travelling, we crossed the amazing Øresund Bridge, which starts as a tunnel, before rising above the sea as a bridge. The journey took about two hours, and we arrived at the vast campsite at about 11:00am. We were some of the first to arrive, though the International Service Team (IST) — responsible for everything from running cafés to cooking fellow IST members their meals — had arrived days earlier.

Once we'd unloaded ourselves and our personal kit from the coach, we were led to our pitch by some



Swedish Scouts, and then set about creating our camp. Every UK unit had sent a separate box of additional gear, primarily for the 'Day of Culture' towards the end of the Jamboree, but also for making the rest of the camp more enjoyable. In

ours, we'd packed some inflatable seats, Berkshire flags, and Union Jack bunting, which added identity to our site. The UK Contingent four-man tents were not quite as bad as we'd first imagined, and had such a plentiful amount of space inside that one could easily stand up in them. That said, our minds were still not completely detracted from the hideous multi-colour fleur-de-lis design on a dark-blue background.

I, along with a single representative from each of the three other patrols, was tasked with sourcing and collecting the gas canisters. Due to the vastness of the site, it took us the best part of an hour to get them. We were further slowed down by the number of friendly international Scouts, who were all too willing to stop and chat!

Once we got back to our area, a cameraman and producer were standing chatting to the other two Berkshire Young Spokespeople (who, like me, received training from PR people from Scouting UK in the months before the Jamboree). The lady was making a short film, possibly to be shown in the Opening Ceremony, about all of the things that are available to do in our 'town centre' (the Jamboree site is split up into smaller areas, called Spring, Summer, Autumn, and our own, Winter). After giving an introduction, I was asked to show where the lavatories were, so walked on-camera to the portable block, then opened the door to reveal Adam reading the Jamboree newspaper on the loo. We knew that it probably wouldn't be included, but had a great laugh in filming it.



In the afternoon, we had time to look around and explore, and all of us were blown away by the scale of it all. What was also striking was the brilliance in our foreign cousins' pioneering skills. There were climbing frames, grand entrance gates, and even a windmill, with the centrepiece being a huge tower, standing 30 metres tall. By night, the tower was illuminated by twelve lights,

which we first saw whilst cooking our premier dinner of the camp, a curry.

After a long and tiring day of travel, we snuggled into our supplied sleeping bags and roll-matts, making for a highly comfortable night's sleep.

Thursday, 28 July 2011

Day Six



Due to the early start the day before, we were permitted a lie-in on Thursday morning. This meant that most of us did not rise until about 9:00am, and consequently the bacon frying pans and cereal bowls were not washed up and cleared away until about noon. This is not unusual for the first day of any camp, and didn't result in the delay of any activities as none had been laid on due to the continuing arrival of attendees. As a result, we were once again given free-time to look around.

At such gatherings of Scouts, it is traditional to partake in the spontaneous activity of badge-swapping with fellow participants. However, I have never taken a great interest in collecting badges from a camp that a Dutch Scout attended in 2006, so instead decided to trade the Berkshire Jamboree Unit badges I'd been given for woggles (the rings that hold neckerchiefs together). I found the Japanese and Korean Scouts to be remarkably generous, receiving many varied and interesting designs of the loops.



© Jonas Elmqvist/Scouterna



Throughout the day, the weather had been – to say the least – wet, with few minutes where at least one or two raindrops had not fallen from the sky. Sadly, as the 40,000 people on-site walked to the Opening Ceremony on Thursday evening, it was tipping it down. Luckily, though, the endless chants of 'Oggy Oggy Oggy' beat off the waterworks, and by the time the show itself started, it was relatively dry. Hannah Williamson, one of the Scouts in my patrol (who had

celebrated her fourteenth birthday the day before, making her one of the youngest Jamboree participants), was given the honour of carrying the Union Flag up onto the main stage, and as she did so, the Berkshire Unit were cheering louder than anyone else from the UK. Bear Grylls (the UK Chief Scout) made an appearance by abseiling down from the main lighting rig, and handed over the rights to hold

the World Scout Jamboree after England hosted the event in 2007. Also on-stage was the King of Sweden, King Carl XVI Gustaf, who's also the Honorary Chairman of the World Scout Foundation, and an electrifying fire-dancing entertainment act.

There was a great moment where every single member of the audience was encouraged to make the sound of "the plop", by sticking their finger in their cheek and then removing it. When everybody did it, at precisely the same time and 'in unison', it sounded tremendous!

After a few token fireworks were launched, we returned to our tents, hoping for the weather to improve soon.



© Björn Wiklander/Scouterna



Friday, 29 July 2011

Day Seven



Once again, we awoke to the pitter-patter sound of rain on canvas, and dressed accordingly: shorts and T-shirts, with an anorak over the top. Breakfast consisted of a few slices of eggy-bread, which tasted delicious, before heading off to Four Seasons Square where the Global Development



Village (GDV) was set up. GDV is an activity common on many large-scale Scout camps, where participants learn about those less fortunate than themselves, and also about the society in which they live. The morning activity that my patrol,

Hanover (each of the four Berkshire 'The Royals' Unit patrols were named after an English Royal Family) did was about communication, and the way in which we can infer through our intonation and body language. After lunch, Daniel Thomas and I popped off to the shop across the square, though because we stopped to chat to a walkabout Jamboree Radio reporter, by the time we returned to the GDV our patrol had, rightly, moved onto the next activity. Consequently, in the heavy downpour, we had to peek our heads around the corner of every tent in a bid to see which of the many they were in. By pure chance, we found them in the last tent we searched... just as they were finishing off. Despite this, we'd had fun, even if it had been merely amusing ourselves by taking photos with an extraordinarily heavily-bearded man.



In the evening, the unit split in half, with two patrols staying at our own camp, and the Hanovers and the Tudors (led by my friend Adam Littleboy) visiting a Swedish unit's camp, a few hundred yards away from our own. It was brilliant to chat to them, and Adam and I got along very well with one lad in particular. Their English was, as is so common across Europe, excellent (Adam even joked that theirs was better than his!), so we felt confident that sarcastically blaming them for the horrible weather that Sweden had

thrown at us for the first couple of days would not be misinterpreted.

Together, we cooked a beef stew with a caramelised pineapple dessert, which everybody enjoyed. As an ice-breaker, the organisers had provided us with a number of challenges to complete, with the main one being



to form the word 'Jamboree' using only ourselves. We made a fair job at it, though Adam's strength was put to the test when he agreed to hold Daniel up above his head to form the top of the 'J'! After a great evening executing a great idea, we headed back to our camp to prepare for Dream, a nighttime activity based in the woods.



© Jakob Svensson/Scouteria/Scouteria

When we got to the entrance, it was 11:00pm and dark. What I did notice, though, was that all of the other 500 people in the queue were wearing full-length trousers to avoid the possibility of getting ticks. I, however, was still in my shorts, but it was too late to go back and change so I was left with no choice but to

proceed. The idea of the activity was to live your life backwards, starting at death, then old-age, where we wore image-distorting glasses and listened to eerie sound effect tapes, symbolising the problems and confusion that comes with being elderly. Next, we were asked to think about our future (or previous) careers, and what they may (or have) bring (or brought). The end of the forest walk was centred around childhood, where one is presented with giant cubes and toys.

At 1:00am, we were one of the first groups to finish, so headed off to bed.

Saturday, 30 July 2011

Day Eight

For the third day in a row, Saturday began with a wet start, but as we in Polcirkeln (the name of our subcamp within Winter, named after a Swedish town) had a free day, we rose late and cooked brunch as a unit. The tins of baked beans proved incredibly hard to open with the terrible tin-openers we'd been provided, but Jim's experienced hands made light work of breaking into them.



It was lovely to be able to explore the last corners of the site and I made use of the free internet café to connect to the internet. Whilst I was in there, I secretly smuggled electricity from the computer's USB port to charge my iPod. I say 'smuggled', because officially one was supposed

to pay 20SEK (£2) to charge a device, but with my phone and camcorder too, it was going to get really expensive. Yet more of a concern, charging my camcorder would have put it out-of-action for an entire day – clearly undesirable when you're attempting to document life at the Jamboree. As I browsed the web, desperately dreaming up a way to plug in, I came across a page on the Jamboree website about 'Young Correspondents'. On further investigation, it transpired that these are Scouts that, unlike Young Spokespeople who are trained to talk to the media, effectively act as the media, reporting back to local newspapers and media outlets back home. I figured that, if I could become a Young Correspondent and use the Media Centre alongside professional journos, I would surely be able to candidly charge my devices.

I was right, and early that evening I signed up for an hour-long session in which I was issued with my press badge, giving me unlimited access to the Media Centre and, more importantly, the power sockets within. At last, I was able to recharge my camera, giving it all the 'juice' it needed after four days without a 'drink'.

By the time I got back to our camp, dinner was already being prepared, when suddenly, completely unexpectedly, a strange, bright object appeared in the sky. It was the sun, emerging from its cumulus hiding place for the first time in days. It was bright, perhaps even warm, and everybody across the entire Jamboree site stopped what they were doing to come out to celebrate the break in the rain. People were singing *The Sun Has Got His Hat On*, dancing, laying on the ground... one French lad even took off his shirt to absorb the rays. Sadly, as quickly as it came, the airborne golden orb hid itself once again, though thankfully the precipitation stayed off for the rest of the day.

After dinner, the three of us Berkshire Young Spokespeople had been invited to attend a gathering in the centre of the site. Unfortunately, that was the extent of our knowledge of where we were going, and so it took about ten minutes to discover a more precise location. When we finally did arrive, we found out that there'd been a confusion with the timings, and we were in fact forty minutes late. Quietly, we crept in at the back, as there was clearly some form of presentation going on. Because I didn't want to make a fuss about getting a chair, I instead sat on a convenient table at the back. Up to this point, we'd avoided drawing too much attention to ourselves, until Julia and Justine sat on the edge of the table with me. Needless to say, the whole thing tilted forward, throwing us off and causing everybody to turn around and see what all of the commotion was about. The presentation itself highlighted examples of how Scouts had drawn media coverage, and featured a fun campaign to "put a neckerchief on a statue". Funnily enough, we'd given Copenhagen's famous Little Mermaid a UK Contingent necker during our stay in Denmark, only for a frustrated local to tell us to get it off.

Once we three had finished, we walked back to our camp. By the time we got there, we realised there was a bad mood in the air. After a week together, there'd been some tensions, resulting in tears. I was pleased to have been out-of-the-way at the critical moment, allowing me to remain impartial and stay a friend to everyone.

Sunday, 31 July 2011

Day Nine



On Sunday, we were one of the first batches of attendees selected to leave the Jamboree site for one day, for a 'camp-in-camp' with Scandinavian Scouts. Once each patrol had packed the things we'd need for the next 24 hours, we headed to the

edge of the campsite where the coaches would pick us up. There were a few dozen other units there too, so there was a period of waiting for those to bundle onto the buses that rapidly came and went, but the time passed quickly as we joined in with our worldwide brothers' and sisters' games.

After an hour's drive, our patrol was dropped off at the 27-acre Hörrens Nygård camp site. We were met by a group of Finnish Scouts who'd act as our hosts, though other groups (including a UK Scout troop, tracing the UK Contingent's footsteps) were having their summer camps at the same site. Having been promised that we didn't need to pack tents, we were keen to find out where to lay down our



sleeping bags. It transpired, though, that our first task was to erect a shelter, which we set about doing with a sheet of tarpaulin and some wood. The other units, also sent from the Jamboree, were having to do the same too, though they seemed to make a far better job at it than we did, and ours ended up being extraordinarily low.

In the afternoon, we taught the rest of the Scouts a number of games, and then turned the tables for them to teach us some of theirs, before moving onto the main task.



Given plastic bottles, bicycle pumps, and wood, in groups of eight we made water rockets and launch-pads. As one may expect, the female half of the group quickly split off to design the rocket's artwork, whilst the males went for the more engineering side – though it was joked that the girls may have made a better job of the latter role than the chaps! Unlike the Danish Scouts' rocket which flew high into the air, ours barely went got even five foot off the ground. That said, it'd been really good fun constructing it.

In the evening, we cooked pasta and beef for dinner, slightly adapting a recipe from the Jamboree Cook Book.

That night, Daniel, Alec (my APL), and I built up our cooking flames into a campfire, and then Simon (my patrol's adult leader) and I led the resulting singing and chanting. I even tried out a version of the drama game Ride That Pony, inspired by German Scouts playing a similar game earlier in the day. Following the lively campfire, we crawled into our beds, ahead of an uncomfortable night in a sleeping-bag full of ants (well how were we supposed to know we'd put our kit down on top of a nest?!).



Monday, 1 August 2011

Day Ten

We all woke up on Monday morning feeling damp. It wasn't raining, but the morning dew had seeped through the thin piece of canvas above us, and covered the ground around us. However, once we'd got a fire going, we quickly warmed up.

Sadly, the bread rolls we'd packed had been slept on, and were consequently a mere bag of breadcrumbs. Fortunately, a 'snack-shack'-type shop was on the other side of the campsite, and we were able to enjoy a chocolate bar breakfast, with Fanta in place of Florida orange juice.



The morning's entertainment was a mini-Olympics activity, where each team competed against another at various 'events', ranging from throwing balls into a bucket, to long-jumping.

At 11:00am, after saying our goodbyes and thank-yous to our hosts, we carried our bags to the end of the track. A coach picked us up and were taken back to the Jamboree site, which – for the first time – was truly basking in sunshine. I decided to head up the giant pioneering pole tower that I mentioned earlier, and it offered unrivalled views across the entire site. To think I was looking out over the temporary homes of many thousands of people, all of whom were Scouts like me, was an amazing thought.



Taking advantage of the sunshine, I washed (using some surprisingly good travel wash) and hung up my dirty laundry.

I'm pretty sure that it was the combination of the good weather and the 'cooling off' period, that meant by the time we sat down for dinner together on Monday evening, the friction between unit members had eased.



At 8:30pm, Adam, Daniel, Joe, and Richard put on their Primark animal costumes and paraded around the site. They provided everybody with a really good laugh, and gained something of a celebrity presence as fellow Scouts stopped them to pose for a photograph with them.

At 10:00pm, I spied great black clouds over on our side of the campsite, so hastily ran back to get my newly dried clothes off the guy-rope washing line. I was just in time, though the rain that fell proved to be only a passing shower. I chatted with other Berkshire members under the dining shelter, before heading off to bed.



Tuesday, 2 August 2011

Day Eleven



Tuesday saw us participating in our third module, Earth. This was intended to make us think about the environment, in addition to the natural problems that plague it, and the reason landscapes are as they are. The first activity was about rivers. In it, we had to dig a channel in a sandpit, being careful to bend it around obstacles such as homes, farms, and factories. Unfortunately, after we poured in the bucket of water, our sandpit looked like a scene from a big-budget disaster movie, with toy cows and 'toxic waste' (shot glasses filled with food-dye) littering the path of the water. The whole exercise did seem a little artificial though, as settlements are always built on the banks of an existing river, rather than the river being dug around the settlements as in this case.

Another activity focused on the effect of disasters such as flooding, which seemed appropriated given the 'Armageddon' we'd just created. We were asked to design a poster about the causes and effects of such tragedies, and I contributed the fact that it has such an economical impact on the lives and livelihoods of so many people. Other groups looked at volcanoes, earthquakes, landslides, and man's impact on the world. Again, though, I couldn't help but notice the irony of the fact that in attempting to learn about how we can 'save the rainforests', we were wasting yet more paper and resources in creating terrible posters to join the many hundreds of others, never to be looked at by anyone again.



After lunch, every Berkshire Unit member had had enough, except one lad, Edward. He argued, quite convincingly, that as we were only here once we may as well make the most of it. Adam and I therefore agreed to stay on with him, and we repeated the poster activity as Edward's patrol hadn't done that one. He seemed to know a fair bit about the origins of hurricanes, so this seemed a natural choice to base our poster on.



Once we'd finished, Adam and I started walking back to our camp, taking a look in a few of all the individual country tents along the route. Italy had an amazing (and huge) reindeer hat, which we were allowed to try on before finding out about Scouts of Saudi Arabia. We also tried our hand at circus skills, one of many 'spontaneous activities' running for the duration of the camp, free for one to try out whenever one wished. I later met up with Joe, with whom I went up the tower once more.



After a cauliflower-cheese dinner, the 'animals' set out for another night, including a go on the temporary ice-rink in Winter town centre. Sadly, all I could do was stand and watch as there were no skates available to hire in my size.

I spent the rest of the evening desperately trying to catch up with my diary, though my efforts were in vain as I was regularly disturbed by passing friendly Scouts, keen to badge-swap. Consequently, I didn't get to bed until about midnight.

Wednesday, 3 August 2011



Day Twelve

After another early breakfast, we had yet another module, Quest. This one was very much more fun-based, and, at any time, one could leave whichever sub-activity they were on and have a go at axe-throwing (like archery, but with great blades instead of arrows). Our first sub-activity was an 'assault course' in which we had to dodge obstacles, crawl under tarpaulin, and climb towers. It certainly wasn't easy, especially as I had my cameras in my hand the whole time, but once I'd got some footage, I dumped them and did it again with Adam and Edward. This time I set out to beat Adam to the finish-line, which I did hands down, though he later claimed he'd been going with Edward, at his pace.



Another exercise saw one of us clinging onto a pioneering pole A-frame, which our team-mates lowered gradually. The person on the A-frame then had to pick up a beanbag on the ground, before being hoisted back up and putting the

beanbag in a bucket. I'm sorry to say that, as a result of being in an all-male group, perhaps we didn't lower the A-frame (and therefore the person on it) as gradually as we should have done, instead choosing to drop them quite suddenly.



One task involved all eight of us holding our own individual rope, attached to a single hook, with which we had to pick up a model castle and move it to a square mat on the ground. This was made harder by the fact the ropes were reverse-wired; i.e. if the team-

member on one side pulled their rope, it would pull the hook closer to the other side. Eventually, we made sense of it and successfully manoeuvred the castle to the aforementioned square, meaning we were allowed to go on to the last activity. Set up as a maze, we were only allowed out if we could say the three secret numbers, discoverable by completing the challenges within the maze. Unfortunately, they weren't very secret, and many of our fellow Scouts were freely broadcasting the combination needed. However, when we got to the exit, the man at the gate said, "Yes, well done, they're the correct numbers." 'Great', we thought, 'that was easy'. "Now then," the man continued, "tell me how you found out the numbers". As we simply didn't know the three methods in which we were supposed to find them, somebody sheepishly exclaimed "A lucky guess?". The man sent us back to finish it properly.

In the morning, during the daily unit meeting, we'd been told that we weren't allowed to cook dinner at 'our place' that evening, and instead had to try and get an invitation for a meal with another nationality. With that in mind, throughout the day we each individually asked friends we'd already made if they could feed a few extra mouths. Out of everybody, it seemed that Adam, Alec, Natasha, Daniel, Joe,



Edward, and I had bagged ourselves the best meal – a three-course sit-down with a unit of Italians. As a starter, a stew, then a tuna and pasta dish for main course. For dessert, a delicious biscuit, baked in an underground oven they'd built. As we left, we signed their shirts, and smiled for a photo with the Italian flag. We promised to be back on Thursday, and said they'd be welcome at ours too, to try out a bit of each other's cultures during the Cultural Festival.

Thursday, 4 August 2011

Day Thirteen



Although no formal activities had been scheduled for anybody on-site, there was still much to do ahead of the afternoon's Festival of Culture. The event was designed to encourage Scouts to learn about the way of life of their foreign cousins, whilst displaying a sample of their own lives for people to come and visit.

To tie in with our nickname, the Berkshire Unit had decided to go with the theme of royalty. A few members spent the morning erecting two thrones out of pioneering poles and sisal, which guests to our site could sit upon in red robes to pose for a photograph as the King or Queen of England. This was just next to a castle (representing Windsor Castle), made out of the sandy earth I'd excavated whilst digging in the paddling pool, which itself, after adding some origami boats, symbolised Dorney Lake. More symbols of Windsor included Lego bricks, crafted from lunch-boxes, and the Long Walk. We were also offering punters "a day at the [Ascot] races", where they had to wind up a long piece of string in order to bring their wooden horse model closer towards them.



At 1:00pm, South Africans blew vuvuzelas to begin the three-hour session of browsing. There was a great deal of food on offer, which quite literally offered a

‘taste’ of foreign life (we ourselves were passing off Asda oxtail packet soup as Brown Windsor soup). I especially enjoyed trying Italian spaghetti bolognese, German pancakes, and Welsh cakes, made by the people who do them best. Other activities on offer included the painting of international flags on faces and arms.



Without meaning to sound immodest, I genuinely think that we had the best range of things to try out and do. My only criticism of the way the event was run is the short window in which we were given to explore. I’d have loved at least another hour, as there was no way anybody could get around everything while also having to do a shift manning their own camp’s activities.



The event closed with a large gathering in front of the main stage, with not just the thousands of participants, but also the camp-in-camp/hike-in-camp hosts. We

(wearing British Royal Family masks) had a much better view of the action than we did at the Opening Ceremony, and as the sun went down behind us, the brilliant Swedish rapper Timbuktu entertained us, before Hoffmaestro took over the stage. I’d heard of neither of the artists before, but really liked the sound of the former: it seemed that I’d been suitably cultured with Scandinavian music!

Friday, 5 August 2011

Day Fourteen



On Friday, we were supposed to complete the last outstanding module, People. This one was supposed to offer the chance to experience and explore many of the elements that make up world cultures; to teach us about the things we share with our brother and sister Scouts; and to make us think about who we are. The thing was, we all knew who we were, and decided there were much more exciting things going on on the campsite. Friday's weather was a little damper than previous days, but that worked to our advantage in the case of one spontaneous activity, Water Balling, as queue times were

dramatically cut. Water balling is like Zorbing (the thing I confused with Zumba in Copenhagen) but it's on water rather than a hillside. You step into what is effectively a plastic bag, which they zip up and then inflate. Then, you're pushed off the platform and into the big paddling pool, free to roll around in at will. Because the water ball is waterproof, you don't get wet, but you can see the water-level on the wall of



the transparent ball. To watch, it's hilarious, as just as the person inside stands up and starts running (like a hamster in a wheel), they inevitably fall over. It gets quite tiring after a while though, and by four-and-a-half of the allowed five-minutes, you begin to notice the thinness of the air. That said, it's tremendous fun, and finally I got the opportunity to have a go at something that is usually quite expensive.

On one of the occasions that I was in the Media Centre, I'd heard that there was a "photo opportunity with the King of Sweden". Evidently, though, it became apparent that places were even more limited than first expected – they'd been cut from unlimited to ten, then to five, and then to just two. Following a fascinating hour-long talk from the head of photography at the Jamboree, it came down to picking names from a hat and sadly my name didn't come up. I wasn't surprised – the odds were one-to-twenty – so took another stroll through the site. I was amazed to see that the main stage had been demolished, and just next to it, a four-sided one was being rigged. I decided that the reason behind this was probably because the following day's Closing Ceremony was to be based on the theme 'Solidarity', by having the stage open on all its sides, it was seen to be all-inclusive and as if we were all 'as one'.



On my way back to the Berkshire Unit pitch, I saw another group's wet-pit (where pasta is drained off, and dirty washing-up water emptied), bordered off with a sign that read 'NO DIVING'. It made me raise a smile, given the colour of the water in it.

We had a meat stew for dinner, and we shared it with some Irish Scouts who'd "put up" a few Berkshire Jamboreers a

couple of days earlier. Sadly, the warm and lovely Italians who'd entertained us never did come for a meal.



Simon Pickett



That night I joined the four Berkshire Unit leaders for tea with a neighbouring Korean unit, in a vaguely political move showing they'd forgiven us for breaking their shovel the day before. Embarrassingly, part-way through the 'summit', Tim Haggett spilt his entire hot drink down his shorts, so ran back to his tent to change. As we finished our chat, one of the Korean leaders (who was also the Korean National Commissioner) presented me with the Korean Venture Scout Handbook; an odd gift, given it was all written in not just a different language, but a completely different writing system. That said, all in all, it was a splendid meeting.

Saturday, 6 August 2011

Day Fifteen



For those who thought that Saturday (our last full day on the campsite) would be a very relaxed day, free to have 'one last go' on the spontaneous activities on offer, there came a rude awakening. Before we were allowed to go anywhere, our entire site (bar the smallest possible number of tents) had to be taken down. The thrones, built just days earlier, were pulled to



pieces; our huge flagpole was, very carefully, dug out and lowered; the sand excavated to dig in the paddling pool was returned to the rectangular footprint; and the dining shelter was taken down. While we packed everything we could into our holdalls (most of us decided to forsake the luxury of a sleeping bag and roll-matt for one night, in exchange for the

benefit of having one less job to do in the morning), a small team who'd already done their bags cooked lunch.

Because the weather had been good all morning, the tents were completely dry and so it was a good time to pack them away. Overnight, we would share a minimal number of tents, squeezing up into as few as possible. What we realised as we packed them into their bags was – despite the rain – how the sun had been so powerful as to turn them from dark-blue to light-purple. Perhaps the weather, all in all, hadn't been as bad as we recalled.

Throughout the site, tents had been disassembled; marquees stripped of their canvas; and lush, green grass (marking the very perimeters of the temporary constructions) stood out vividly against the heavily-trodden ground in the Global Development Village.



Because all we'd bought for dinner and the following day's breakfast were hand-holdable bread rolls, we were able to return our tables and chairs, all in a bid to speed up our departure from the site on Sunday morning.

At 1:30pm, we were given a final few hours of free-time. There were only a couple of things that I really still wanted to do: the first, a zip-wire off a huge haystack, as part of The Tivoli (a 'funfair' with working carousels, swings, and a big wheel – made professionally chiefly out of pioneering poles and knots). However, the queue was too long, so I moved on. It was a similar situation on the other thing that I wanted to try out, a dry surfing 'simulator'. There, a giant, tilted conveyor-belt floor made up of little brushes enabled one to get the feeling of surfing. At this point, a number of my friends began to realise how much they'd missed out on. I, however, was confident that – as I'd tried both before at other places anyway – I had made the most of what was on offer, especially the Water Balling.



© Jonas Elmqvist/Scouterna/Scouterna

when at 9:30pm the rain came, we got drenched. So wet it became that some left the Closing Ceremony to dry off. Those of us who did stay, though, we were rewarded with the tremendous Eighties' rock band Europe (who, as it turned out, originated in Sweden), performing their smash hit *The Final Countdown*. The rest of the show was filled with the official Jamboree handover to Japanese Scouts, a video montage of the camp shown on the giant screens, and then a speech by the King of Sweden (who'd had quite a presence during the camp). Finally, some music accompanied an array of impressive fireworks, before everyone ran back to dry off.

Perhaps we should have noticed the grey clouds hovering above us, just before we took our seats at the Closing Ceremony. Maybe we were just caught up with the excitement that our 'Be Prepared' motto was forgotten. Whatever the reason, none of us had taken waterproofs (but then again, like many UK Contingent members, a large number of the Berkshire participants had swapped theirs anyway) and so



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Alec and I were extremely hungry, and decided to go for a jog through the site in order to find fire (to warm ourselves up) and food to eat. I found a German group being merry around a campfire, so asked if we could join them to warm up. At last, I was dry again, and I went back to get some sleep (despite the thunder and lightning around us), while Alec continued scavenging for anything he could find.

Sunday, 7 August 2011

Day Sixteen



After the hideous weather of the night before, we awoke at 6:30am and packed the last things away into our holdalls. Some had barely slept at all, having spent the night attempting to 'trophy hunt' (a term given to the forbidden 'sport' of scavenging for camp memorabilia), though in the end they succeeded only in unplugging the lights to the Winter town centre.

As Joe, Adam, and I got up, we discovered our friend Luke Christmas had spent the night in the other 'pod' in our tent on his own, whilst all of the other lads – assuming that our tent was crammed – squeezed into the other two two-man tents that were still standing. Consequently, everyone was a little grouchy in the morning, not helped by the still heavy rain, the need to take down seven tents within twenty minutes, and the fact that the clothes in our non-waterproof bags (now out of the tents and exposed to the weather) were slowly being soaked.



After the site had been inspected for litter, we

walked with our bags to the 'bus stop' on the other side of the campsite, where we'd be collected by coach to head off to Stockholm. Because a couple of the unit members (who happened, by pure chance, to be the stronger ones) had been sent to put the fairly lightweight tents in the shipping container to be sent back to England, I had to help carry their 20kg holdalls, in addition to my own 30kg of gear. Whilst this should be no small task, the ergonomics of it, as a result of their uncomfortable straps, made for a fairly painful walk. Eventually, though, we were lined up with breakfast rolls in hand, set to leave the site for good. In the end, it



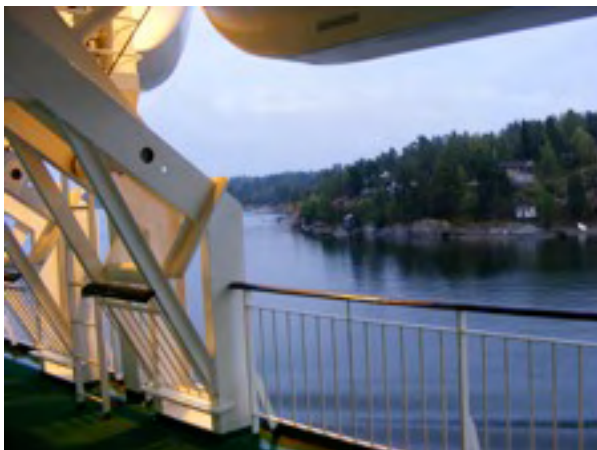
was about an hour's wait, and we didn't leave until 9:00am. Worse still, what had been described as a five-hour drive materialised into an nine-hour confinement within the disgusting, sweaty, and stuffy vehicle. Luckily, we got a taste of the sweet,

fresh air during a late lunch break at McDonalds, strangely just minutes after we'd stopped at a fuel garage where unit members had just stocked up on chocolate and sweets.

We were meant to arrive at the ferry terminal well before 5:30pm, giving us over two hours to check-in and sort out the tickets, though we actually didn't get there until about 6:15pm. Hurriedly, we got our luggage out from underneath the coach, and walked briskly up the escalator with our bags. As it turned out, the ferry operator did still allow us to check-in, and there was a period of around an hour before we were able to board.



Once we did get on, we first headed to our cabins which were, and I mean not to understate, extraordinarily small. They were cosy and comfy though, and the boat's slow speed through the calm waters looked set to give us a greatly better night than any other we'd had for weeks. Yet before that, we had to choose one of the ferry's five restaurants to spend the 100SEK (£10) that the UK Contingent had issued us with to buy dinner. Immediately, though, there was a problem. As I'd suspected when I was issued with my coupons, the 100SEK would barely buy us a snack in the onboard supermarket, let alone a filling meal. Our leaders promised to sort this out – once they'd finished their own dinners, mind – and eventually we were issued with another 45SEK, just enough to buy ourselves a seat at the all-you-can-eat buffet restaurant. Being hungry Scouts, naturally this seemed to be the best outcome, and each of us enjoyed our dinners (note the use of the plural).



At 12:30pm, having guffawed at our fellow passengers' dancing at the disco upstairs (viewable from a CCTV camera, bizarrely accessible on the TVs in the cabins), we snuggled down.

Monday, 8 August 2011

Day Seventeen



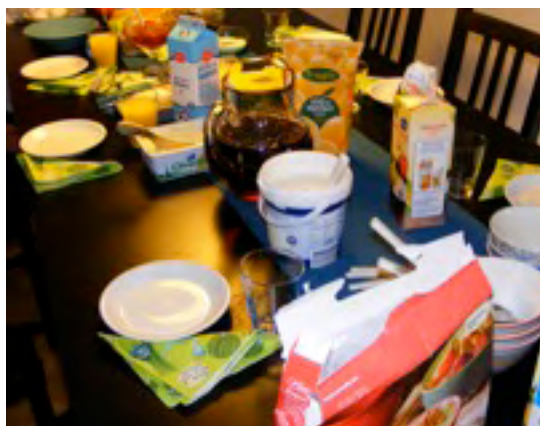
Once we'd advanced our watches by another hour, in sync with Helsinki's Greenwich +2hr timezone, the morning broke with terrifying pace. It quickly became obvious that we'd woken too late for our buffet breakfast, and everyone in the corridor outside was frantically bustling through with their bags. It was only 6:00am Finnish time, but we'd already docked in Turku.



As we walked off the boat, a crowd of people were standing watching out for us, and within that crowd were a couple, Kaisa and Juha Juhanaja, holding an A4 sign reading 'Andrew B and Alec B'. In this final stage of the Jamboree experience, our unit was split up into smaller groups and pairs, then distributed with Scouting families across the south of Finland (we were staying in an area called Kaarina) in what is known as 'Home

Hospitality' or 'HoHo'. Other UK and international units had been shipped off to countries across Europe, but whilst some were upset that, when it came to the luck of the draw, we missed out on a trip to Spain, I was pleased to be spending the three-and-a-half days in yet another country I'd never visited before.

Once Alec and I arrived at the family home, we met Lassi (our 14-year-old 'brother') and Julia (our 18-year-old 'sister'). Luckily, they hadn't eaten breakfast either, so at 9:00am, over bowls of cereal and plates of hot buttered toast, we all sat down and discussed everything from the way the Finnish education system works, to the celebrations Turku had enjoyed so far this year, whilst it holds the status of EU Capital of Culture.



Neither Alec or I had anything that we felt we strongly wanted to do, leaving us free to participate in whatever activities our host family lay on for us. They suggested a trip to Turku city centre, where there's a high ropes course called Flowpark (very similar to Go Ape in the UK). It opened at 12:00am, and we were its first customers of the day. I was astonished at just how self-administered the safety devices were; maybe it's the same at the UK equivalent, but even still, I feared slightly for the life of a girl who couldn't be much older than six.



We spent three hours at the park, in which I tried every route at least once (I really enjoyed the zip-wire one, but on another I struggled to pull myself up a ten-metre rope), but all of the exercise and adrenaline had made us all work up a huge appetite. Fortunately, in the modern shopping centre immediately next to Flowpark, there was a pizza buffet style restaurant (Alec's and mine's second all-you-can-eat meal in less than 24 hours)!

Once we returned to the bungalow, we each showered and, of course, independently tried out the traditional Finnish sauna. Then, we headed out with the male Juhanojas to observe the breathtaking view from the top of a dry ski slope, the stairs of which Lassi repeatedly ran up and down in fitness training for his passion of cross-country skiing. Distorted only by the occasional telegraph pole, we could see for miles: homes, a river, and even a couple of combine harvesters bringing in the crop.



Back 'home', for dinner, we had some spicy chicken that Juha had barbecued, which tasted delicious. "Traditional Finnish food," his wife sarcastically joked.

Tuesday, 9 August 2011

Day Eighteen



To appeal to our needs, Kaisa permitted the whole family a lie-in, resulting in us not waking until 9:00am. Even then, breakfast was at the relaxed, if not lazy, time of 9:45am. But, once we were out and about, the morning looked set to have us active. As Lassi was heading to a snow-tunnel anyway, again in training for his skiing, we tagged along. The family lent Alec and me some equipment, and whilst Alec was like a duck to water, I was a little less balanced. However, after three laps of the 700-metre one-way loop, I managed to do a fourth flawlessly, without falling over at all. A big achievement for me, but obviously nothing compared to the professionals who skied alongside me.



We drove back for a late lunch with the others, then all went for a walk in a wood. The original intention had been that we'd light a fire in the designated area (apparently popular with young people in the evenings of the last days of term), but in the end we simply chose to explore. Alec and I

were both surprised by the rocky ground, though our hosts told us that it's common in forests across Finland, as are the large number of blueberry plants. In fact, Alec, a fan of outdoor activities, kept imagining ways in which he could use



the landscape to pull tricks on his mountain bike, while jumping great boulders. Within the woodland, there was a purpose-built observation tower. From here we could see out to the sea, and could look out over one of the many Finnish islands between Sweden and Finland. As Hertta (the family's dog) was beginning to become tired, we returned to the car and drove back home.



En-route, we called in at the Finnish Scouting Museum in Turku, where our friends (being hosted by friends of the Juhanojas) were already looking around. Sadly, interesting as it may have been, the information was understandably only written in Finnish. Luckily, an English-speaking person was on hand to guide us through some of the more unique exhibits, such as Baden Powell's belt and the neckerchiefs of every Scout group in the area. We arranged to re-meet later that evening.

At 6:00pm, both 'families' drove to the "beach" near our house. However, it turned out that there'd been a mistranslation, and whilst we'd been expecting endless golden sand-dunes, it turned out to be a mere jetty. That said, we still had great fun, diving into the water and attempting mid-air tumble-turns. There were also volleyball and basketball courts, and an enthusiastic match between the two countries at the latter sport (in which the adults joined in too) followed. The sun set as the last basket was scored, resulting in a win for Finland.



Once we got home, I used the sauna and shower once more, and then logged onto the BBC News website to learn about the hugely violent and disruptive riots that had occurred in England over the preceding few days. Once I'd finally digested all of the coverage it offered, I headed off to bed.

Wednesday, 10 August 2011

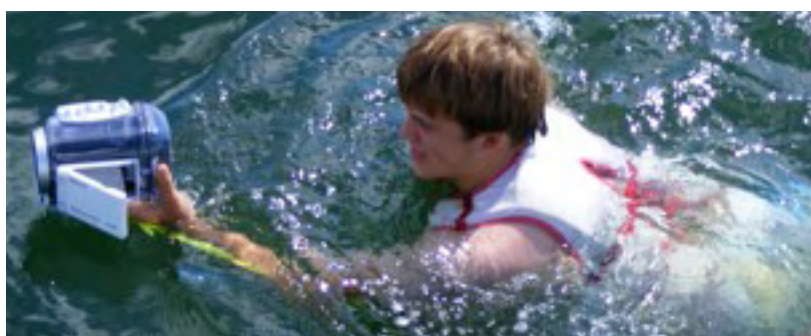
Day Nineteen



Given the beautiful weather, our hosts were keen to make the most of their sailing boat by taking us out on it for the day. With an image of a small little craft in mind, I was amazed when the family climbed aboard a much larger-than-expected vessel. Juha used the engine to get it out of the marina, then encouraged us to help Lassi hoist the sails. Whilst

these were initially powerful, the windspeed soon dropped so much that they were simply useless. We packed them away, and turned on the engine once more.

It was great to cruise through the extraordinarily calm waters; Alec even had a go at steering the huge wheel, while I stood back and photographed the vistas. Soon after noon, our hosts suggested we jumped



off the boat and swam to an island a few hundred metres away. It was really beautiful, and I used my waterproof camera housing to photograph and film the view. That said, I had to keep my eyes on the ground, as we'd been warned of venomous snakes, apparently rife in such landscapes.



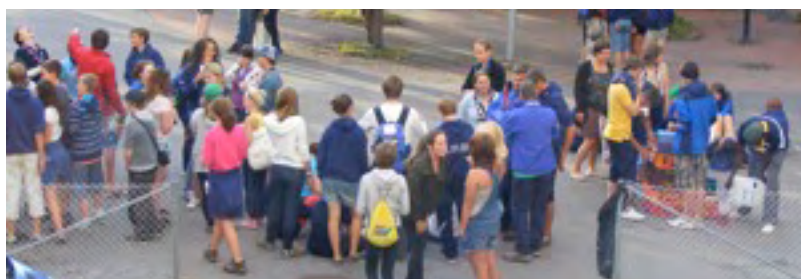
At about 3:00pm, Juha moored the boat back at the marina, and then we drove back to the house for a wash.



In the evening, Julia drove her friend (who'd just got back from being an IST member in Rinkaby), Alec, and me to Turku, where – along with many of the other Berkshire Jambroeeers – we participated in an orienteering challenge across the city centre, organised by the host district. As one can well imagine, being back with our friends, who we'd seen every day for so long, after two days apart certainly acted as a distraction; rather than map-reading ourselves, the Finnish Scouts who accompanied us ended up leading us while we just talked. What rapidly became apparent was how fortunate Alec and I had been with our Home Hospitality family: a few of our friends had been expected to pay for everything, while another group had done little more than playing on a PlayStation the whole time. I may have misunderstood, or the others may have exaggerated somewhat, but I certainly realised just how lucky we'd been with our placement with the Juhanojas.



Like in the church in Denmark, Turku Cathedral (one of the stops on our route) had a beautiful organ too, and outside the building we smiled for a photograph. We also stopped in the main market square, and passed the Sibelius Museum (Sibelius is to the Finns what Elgar is to us). Our tour, ahem, I mean orienteering challenge, finished back where it started, outside the Finish Scouting Museum we'd visited the day before.



Once we all got home, each of us began packing our holdalls for the last time, before lying down for our last sleep before England.

Thursday, 11 August 2011



Day Twenty

As morning light awoke us, I realised that I hadn't plugged in my camcorder to charge overnight, and as a result I would miss some of the most film-worthy moments of the trip – particularly the reunion with parents that night. It was too late to do it by then, and I was crushed. To my great relief, though, I discovered that my spare battery still had just enough 'puff' in it to see me through, so I cheered up once again.

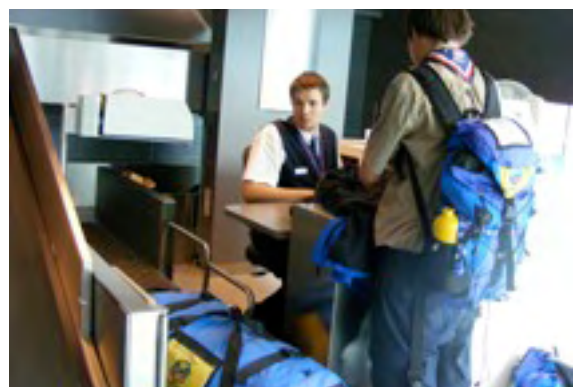
After breakfast, Alec and I presented the Juhanojas with some gifts to remind them of us. I gave them a Lesley Olver watercolour of Maidenhead Bridge and some ornamental clichés of Britain (teddy bears red telephone boxes and Union Flags), while Alec gave them a full-colour book featuring aerial photography of the Thames and a Windsor Castle fridge magnet.



I was keen to take a photograph of the whole family (with Alec and me) outside their home, but as I hadn't packed a tripod, we had to balance the camera on some books and neckerchiefs, and leave it on the self-timer function. Then, we fetched our filled-to-the-brim holdalls and put them in the boot of the car.

We had to be at the coach park in Turku at 1:00pm, but by leaving 75 minutes in advance, we had time to grab a Subway lunch (much to the envy of our peers), and for Kaisa to buy us some Finnish salmiakki sweets (again, much to the envy of our peers) as a leaving gift. Despite having to say 'goodbye' to our hugely hospitable hosts at this point, through Facebook and email we hope to keep in touch.

From Turku, the unit was driven to Helsinki Airport, where we quickly checked in our bags. At security, though, Daniel Thomas realised he still had a penknife in his pocket, which he obviously had to throw away. He half-jokingly asked me whether he should try smuggling it, but after reminding him of the possible consequences should he get caught, he changed his mind.





Much of Finland was obscured by cloud as we flew home, but once in London's airspace, we could clearly see the landmarks beneath us. As we got off the plane, the pilots had, extremely unusually, opened the cockpit door, allowing us all to stop to peer in. Much to the displeasure of the flight attendant (keen to usher everybody off the plane as quickly as possible), all of us intrigued Scouts created a giant queue down the aisle of the plane!



Once we'd collected our holdalls, Tim Haggett found out that the coach to take us back to 3rd Upton Scout Hut had not arrived. Consequently, we were left waiting around in Arrivals for some time, but eventually we climbed aboard the very last bus of the trip.

As we neared the end, there was an odd atmosphere on the coach. The end of the adventure of our lifetimes was nigh. As we got off there were just

so many happy faces (including that of Natasha Marlow's rabbit who'd come along too) as we were welcomed back into the arms of our families. Some had tears in their eyes – tears of sorrow to be leaving some brilliant friends, and tears of joy to be back with their loved ones. In a final debrief, Simon Pickett paid tribute to all of us (including our parents), concluding "We just wanted to say to you all a really big thank you, because it's been a privilege and an honour to be able to lead you to the World Scout Jamboree. Really, genuinely, that is the case."



I've got a brother that I've never met, I've got a
sister that's not introduced to me yet. But we
want the same things: we dream of a happy end.
And maybe the stranger coming your way is just
waiting to be a friend.

— Daniel Lemma / Pär Klang,
Changing the World, official 22nd
World Scout Jamboree song



Post-Script

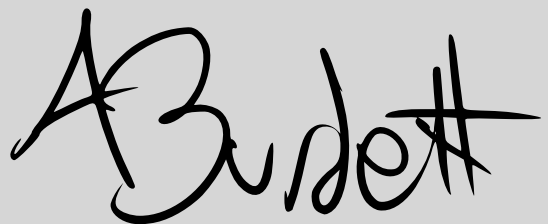
When I set off for the Jamboree, like many others, I didn't know what to expect.

We'd done training camps and attended meetings, used Twitter to connect to other United Kingdom units and looked at Facebook posts from the official Sweden Jamboree page. But not even all of that can really prepare you for such a unique experience. I say "unique" to the surprise of some: surely the other 40,000 attendees have virtually identical recollections? Of course they'll be similar, but everybody's will differ slightly.

And let's not forget that out of the 30 million Scouts (from 161 countries) worldwide, only 0.13 percent of them were on that field in Sweden for those ten days. It was a real privilege to be one of them, and one of just 36 from Berkshire.

I am eternally grateful to everybody who got me there: my parents, John Stevens (a friend from church and former Scoutmaster), the people who put me through at the selection camp, the retailers who allowed us to bag-pack at their shops, Kate and Andrew Richards, Dorothy Stott, Chris Sawyers, Furze Platt Scout Group, Maidenhead Scouting District, the Lions Club of Maidenhead, the Maidenhead Rotary and Rotaract Clubs, the Spoore Merry and Rixman Foundation, and the UK and Swedish organising teams. Special thanks are also due to the Berkshire Unit leaders, Simon Pickett, Tim Haggett, Jim Payen, and Kathryn Stafford, as well as Jackie Crocombe, the unit treasurer, and all those who helped with the training camps and training days. (If I have missed anybody out, I am sincerely sorry.)

My abiding memories are of the camaraderie of our unit, the instant friendship between any two Scouts of any two nationalities as a result of simply both wearing a neckerchief, and the awesome sight of so many young people sharing their passion and love of Scouting. In recent years, Scouting has been seen by some to be "uncool", but the Jamboree very much disproved that myth. I'm sure that Lord Robert Baden-Powell, if he were still with us today, would have been proud of the 22nd World Scout Jamboree, which was essentially a celebration of his now 104-year-old idea, Scouting.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'A Burdett'. The signature is stylized with a large 'A' and a long, sweeping underline that extends across the word 'Burdett'.

Andrew Burdett
August 2011

