

FREESPIRIT NEWS!

WINTER TERM 2009 - ISSUE NO.1



Welcome to the FreeSpirit Explorer Scout Newsletter. Scouting is almost 103 years old and Explorer Scouting is the senior section of the movement specifically aimed at 14-18 year olds. FreeSpirit Explorers have been delivering an exciting, balanced activity programme in the Torfaen area for over 6 years. The programme is extensive, covering weekly meetings, a weekend camp every month and an annual camp that comprises 7-14 days normally at the beginning of the school summer holidays. This successful Unit would not be able to function without the fantastic support from Parents, fellow Scouters, local councillors, local charities, organisations, companies and friends who are sympathetic to the aims of Scouting. This newsletter is our way to say thank you to our supporters and to keep you up to date with our activities.

- Simon Fairless (Leader)

AWESOME

Once again we kicked the year off with Awesome. We packed up our kit and headed to the Glanus estate for a weekend full of activities including kayaking, watersliding, huge discos and prepared many rabbits with Osama. Scouts from all over Wales and England attended and there was even a visit from the absconding sheep from summer camp—Ianto!

CANOE CRUISE

The canoe cruise was good because it gives people of different skill levels the chance to have a bit of fun on the river, share jokes and have fun with a vortex.

The only problem with it this year was the still water, it would have been better if the current was flowing and it gave me a chance to practice my river reading skills. -Kierran

DID YOU KNOW?



Hergé (the creator of Tin Tin) got his first break through drawing cartoons for his Scout Troop's magazine!



DID YOU KNOW?

COMMITTEE NIGHT

A new school year saw a new Explorer Scout Committee with their first task being to plan an explorer night. They came up with the idea of a chocolate night which included taste testing, a chocolate fountain and a flour game that quickly descended into a flour fight!

INTERVIEW WITH A LEADER!

Name: Mike (a.k.a. Osama)

Age joined scouting: 8

Who would be your dream UK commissioner?:

Someone high profile who could give lots of time to Scouting.

Where would you most like to attend a Jamboree?:

New Zealand

Which activity do you most enjoy taking part in?:

Gorge walks

What's the best thing you've experienced in Scouting so far?: Seeing the looks on kids faces when they're

experiencing something new (Michelle says: meeting me!)



FIREWORKS NIGHT

We arrived at Goytre Scout and Guide hut to have a Buff fire and cookout. While gathered around the fire, Rosie distracted us with sweets which we descended upon like scavengers! We had fireworks and sparklers and towards the end of the night, Mike's parents turned up and kindly gave us a spot of tea. - Steve H

CAVE SLEEPOVER/GORGE WALK

Only two explorers went on the gorge walk and dragon night in October - Matt and I met Mike, Rich and Rosie at the mine where we were spending the night. After a little trek from the car park we went into the mine and found a nice stone-less and dry area to set down our sleeping bags and went to explore. Afterwards, we settled down and tried to sleep, although with Rosie's foghorn snoring and my rather loud sleep talking the others didn't get much sleep. In the morning we got our bags packed and set off to meet Jon and start the gorge walk. The walk itself was great with Jon escaping near death by falling down a wall into a waterfall... twice! The bog was fun with matt claiming he stood on a dead sheep and me falling in twice. We then went on a waterslide in the river to get washed. It was a fab day overall! - Jennie

NIGHT HIKE

We met at the harvester and were re-distributed into leader's cars for a drive to the drop-off point. We then split into groups and bluffed to the leaders that we knew exactly where we were going. Fortunately for our group, we'd done the walk before and really did know where we were going! Matt, Fil and I got through the walk in just over our estimated time, with no sign of the other groups. When we got there, we found hotdogs waiting for us with no other groups around. After a while we started to get a little concerned that we could see no one coming down the mountain, and then Buff rang. He and Mike had set off last and had caught all the other groups up apart from us, they were all around 20 minutes away. Matt told him we had already finished and we proceeded to eat some (read: most) of the hotdogs in celebration before the others got back.

- Rhona

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS!

- The unit celebrated its' 6th Birthday this year!
- Olli 08/09
- Tristan 15/09
- Rhona 22/09
- Jon 03/11
- Nathan 09/09
- Carla 16/09
- Tom 03/11
- Ethan 17/12
- Stephen 24/12



ARCHERY

All the explorers met at half seven on a Monday night at Dragon Archery to have a fun packed 2 hours of archery. For the first hour we did regular archery i.e. just shooting at the target to see who could score the most, and some people decide they would be the first to smash one of the lights. In the second hour the instructors blew up some balloons and stuck them onto the targets and we had to hit as many as we could, it goes without saying that we all had great fun doing this. We packed everything up said thank you to them.

READY STEADY COOK

Each of us were told to bring a food that is normally eaten on camp. After being separated into four groups we were told we'd be participating in a cook off, the leaders being judges on the best dish. We cooked pasta, vegetarian spaghetti bolognaise and even some pancakes, but in the end we never did find out who won.

- Carla

CHRISTMAS MEAL

This year for our Christmas meal, we all met at Tiffins in Cwmbran. We all had to dress up in smart clothes. The boys had to wear black trousers, and a smart shirt. The girls had to wear a dress, or a smart blouse skirt or trousers. We had a really good time, and as



always we had some embarrassing photos taken in the restaurant. Whilst we were there, four members of our unit got invested— Ashley, Tristan, Liam and Dan (Frodo). We had a very good time, and would like to thank Tiffins once again for having us. - Laura

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY!

- 12-14 Feb - Reunion camp
- 29 Mar - 9 Apr - Half term
- 25-27 June - Malvern Challenge
- 2-4 July - Sun Run
- 24-31 July - Summer camp
- 1-3 Oct - Canoe Cruise

DID YOU KNOW?

The Scouts Raised £101,053 for a new lifeboat named "The Scout". It was named by the Queen in 1975 in Hartlepool!

DID YOU KNOW?

CHRISTMAS PARTY

At this year's Christmas party we had lots of food and several games the evening was enjoyable for all. As always the Christmas party is a nice end to the explorer term giving us time to socialise and just have fun. - Matt O'B

